

FINANCIAL TIMES

Weekend FT
Royals - the family firms
SECTION II



The tiger's sorry tale



Take the plunge

3 pages on water sports



World Business Newspaper

WEEKEND APRIL 20/APRIL 21 1996

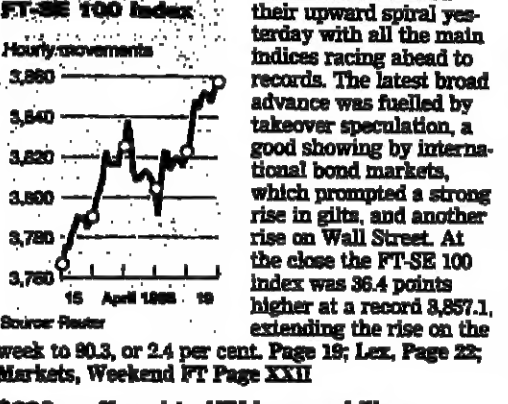
EU regulators clear contraceptive pill of health warning

Oral contraceptives of the kind labelled by the UK government as potentially dangerous have been given qualified clearance by European medicines regulators. They said blood clots caused by oral contraceptives were rare. UK Liberal Democrat health spokesman Simon Hughes said the UK government had acted rashly in issuing a health warning. "It is now clear that many women stopped taking the pill and figures show that abortions and unwanted pregnancies have rocketed in recent months." Page 4

Spills in Italian alliances: Big differences emerged in the leadership of Italy's rightwing Freedom Alliance, headed by former premier Silvio Berlusconi, as the campaign for tomorrow's general election closed. Page 22; Olive branch, Page 8

Kohl to speed tax reforms: German chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union said it would accelerate plans for a fundamental reform of the country's income tax system. Page 22

FT-SE index closes at record high



\$800m offered to HIV haemophiliacs: Companies which make blood clotting agents for haemophiliacs offered \$800m to compensate Americans who contracted the HIV virus from their products in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Page 22

Westpac deal to create largest NZ bank: Westpac Bank of Australia said its NZ\$2.27bn (\$870m) bid for Trust Bank would create New Zealand's largest bank, with combined assets of NZ\$23.8m. Westpac topped an offer from Lloyds TSB of the UK. Page 5

Telecom talks stall: Trade negotiators from the US, Japan, Canada and the European Union failed to resolve differences over a plan to liberalise global telecommunications but there are hopes of progress in ministerial talks this weekend. Page 3

US and Japanese airlines in accord: US airline Delta and Japanese carrier ANA agreed to share flights between Tokyo and Los Angeles from September. Page 2

Aker chairman resigns: A power struggle at Aker, the Norwegian offshore engineering and cement group, intensified when Gerhard Heiberg resigned as chairman two days after he forced the resignation of chief executive Tom Rund. Page 5

Biocompatibles seeks to raise \$250m: Biocompatibles International, the UK medical company floated a year ago, is to raise \$250m (\$76m) in a rights and warrants issue. Page 6

UK car production buoyant: Car production in the UK remained buoyant last month in spite of reports, based on confusing data, that output had fallen compared with March last year. Page 4

Rugby player wins case against referee

A British rugby union player, paralysed after a scrum collapsed during a game in 1991, won a landmark High Court damages action in London against the match referee. The court's decision that referee Michael Nolan had been negligent in his handling of the scrum, is the first of its kind. Ben Smolton (left), Thomas Whitworth for £1m (\$1.55m). Mr Justice Currie found Mr Whitworth had not been to blame. Damages will be assessed later. Page 4

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Middle East ceasefire hopes rise

By Julian Ozzane in Jerusalem, David Gardner in Beirut and Bruce Clark in Moscow

Israeli and pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrilla leaders yesterday held out the prospect of a ceasefire being agreed this weekend.

But both sides continued to exchange shell and rocket fire across the border between Lebanon and Israel.

World leaders gathered at a summit on nuclear safety in Moscow issued a joint appeal for an immediate ceasefire and arranged a meeting of the foreign ministers of the US, Russia, France and Italy in the Syrian capital Damascus today.

In Tel Aviv Mr Dennis Ross, US President Bill Clinton's peace envoy, met Israeli leaders as Washington joined intensive diplomatic efforts under way in the region by France, Russia and the European Union to reach a halt to the nine days of violence.

As condemnation continued to pour into Israel over its killing on Thursday of at least 107 Lebanese civilians sheltering at a UN base, Israel said it was ready to implement a ceasefire as soon as Hizbollah stopped rocketing towns in northern Israel.

Asked if the violence could be ended within the next 48 hours, Mr Peres said: "It's possible, it's not certain, but there is a chance." Hizbollah, for its part, said Israel must stop firing first before its guerrillas halt their rocket attacks.

Israel and Hizbollah continue shell and rocket attacks

"Let the Israelis stop their bombardment seriously and without delay and they will find the holy warriors will not fire a bullet at settlers in the settlements, let alone a rocket," said Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadallah, Hizbollah's spiritual guide.

Syria said it hoped a ceasefire could be reached "within hours and not days" but Mr Rafik al-Hariri, the Lebanese prime minister, said an agreement could take four or five days.

Mr Hariri said he had begun negotiations with Hizbollah to end its attacks. But a senior Arab official said a call by Iran for Hizbollah to stop its operations against Israel could delay a swift ceasefire agreement.

The official said Iran was using Hizbollah as a lever to try to force the US into direct talks with Tehran and to ease Washington-led international pressure to isolate the Iranian Shia regime.

Mr Hariri also ruled out Lebanon acquiescing to Israel's demand, as presented in a US proposal, that the ceasefire agreement be extended to ban not only attacks on civilians by both sides but to include a prohibition on Hizbollah attacks on Israeli soldiers occupying Lebanon.

"What you are asking is to make the life of Israeli soldiers who are occupying Lebanese soil easy," Mr Hariri said. "Nobody

will accept that. I don't see any government can accept that."

Mr Hariri said he expected the agreement to be broadly similar to an unwritten US brokered deal of July 1983 which committed both Hizbollah and Israel not to attack civilians.

A revival of the July 1983 understandings has won support from Syria, Lebanon, Hizbollah, Russia and the European Union and is the focus of the current Middle East mission of Mr Hervé de Charette, the French foreign minister.

But Israel has insisted that a new ceasefire agreement should go beyond the 1983 understandings and should be a written document signed by all the parties.

Before Thursday's deaths, the US backed Israel's demand for a more extensive ceasefire arrangement and snubbed the French initiative, but Washington appeared yesterday to be falling into line with Europe.

Israel, however, continued to put its faith in US efforts yesterday in the hope that Mr Peres, facing elections in less than six weeks, could emerge with at least cosmetic changes to the July 1983 understandings.

Without a stronger ceasefire document it will be difficult for Mr Peres to present his Lebanon offensive to Israel as a victory.

Lebanese trapped in the middle, Page 3

Bitter harvest of bombardment, Page 7

UK could block attempt to lift Ulster beef ban

By Caroline Southey in Brussels

The European Commission has indicated it would view sympathetically a request to lift the beef export ban in Northern Ireland, but the British government is resisting any partial removal of the ban.

A senior British official in Brussels said the government was "not keen on regional exceptions" to the ban, arguing that it would be more difficult to secure a total lifting of the ban once it had been partially eased. "The temptation would be to lift some bits of the ban, leaving others to one side," he said.

Northern Ireland farmers and politicians have been pressing Mr Franz Fischler, EU agriculture commissioner, to lift the ban in the province. They claim there have been fewer cases of BSE - mad cow disease - in Northern Ireland than in mainland Britain and that an effective disease tracing system is in place.

Mr Fischler has said he would view such a request sympathetically, but that it would have to be made by the UK government.

The British official said that such a request from the government would also suggest that it accepted the legitimacy of the ban. "We believe the ban is not justified on scientific evidence. We are trying to make the political case that there needs to be a move towards lifting the total ban," he said.

However, Mr Douglas Hogg, the British minister of agriculture, has previously argued that grass-fed herds should be excluded from the ban. This would cover a majority of herds in Northern Ireland, as well as a number in the rest of the UK.

Only 1,600 cases of BSE have been recorded in Northern Ireland since November 1988, compared with 180,000 cases in mainland UK.

Mr Alistair MacLaughlin, director-general of the Ulster Farmers' Union, said the reasons for the



Clinton pays respects to war dead ahead of summit

US President Bill Clinton yesterday paid his respects to Russian victims of the Second World War during a visit to St Petersburg.

Mr Clinton (above) reviewed an honour guard as he paid his respects to Russians killed at the siege of Leningrad, the former communist name for the city.

The US president made a stopover in St Petersburg on his way to a two-day summit in Moscow on nuclear security

attended by the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations.

At the summit, Russian president Boris Yeltsin backed an international ban on nuclear testing, but said he would not dismantle Russia's test facilities.

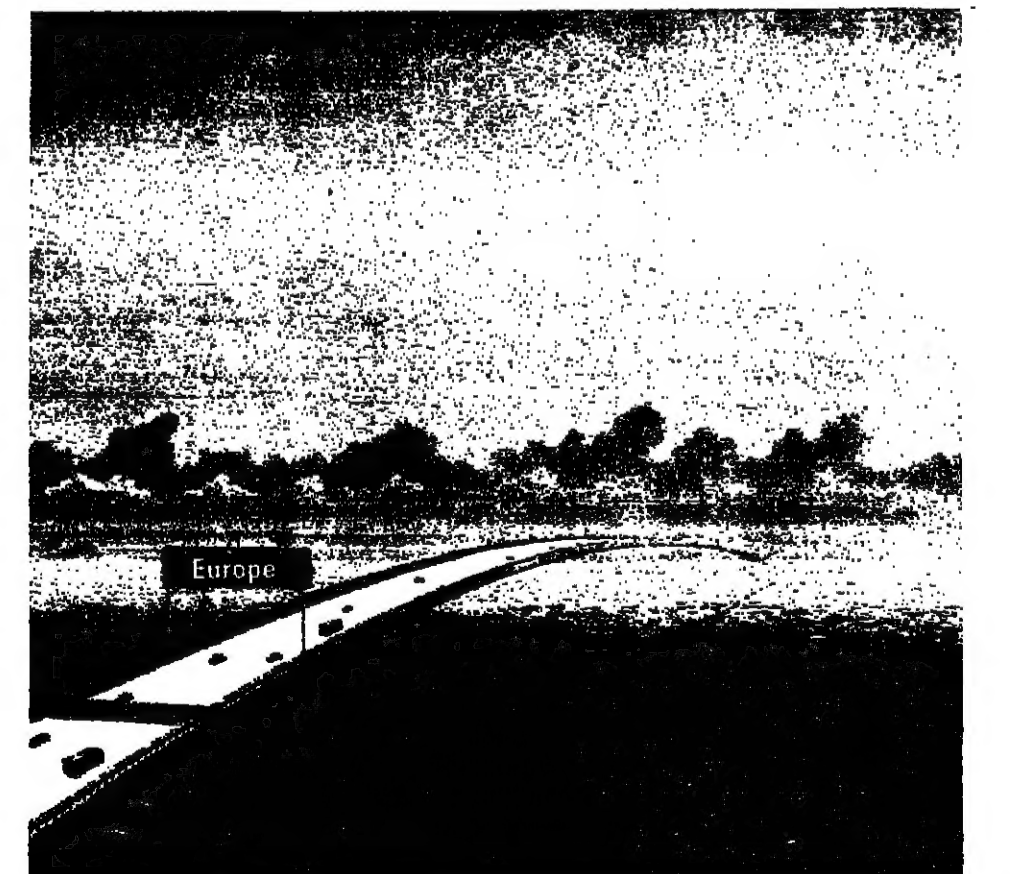
The summit aims to improve the safety of nuclear reactors and help manage the former Soviet Union's ill-guarded stocks of weapons-grade material.

Report, Page 2

Continued on Page 22

STOCK MARKET INDICES			
FT-SE 100	3,857.1	(+35.4)	
Yield	3.85		
FT-SE Eurotrack 100	1,695.01	(+5.80)	
FT-SE-A All-Share	1,824.77	(+0.94)	
FT-SE-A All-Share	1,824.77	(+0.94)	
New York: S&P Composite	6,451.25	(+2.21)	
Dow Jones Ind. Ave	6,541.25	(+10.48)	
S & P Composite	6,451.25	(+2.21)	
NORTH SEA OIL (Aargus)			
Brent Dated	\$18.54	(19.24)	
GOLD			
New York Comex Jan	\$382.7	(38.2)	
London	\$390.5	(39.2)	
STERLING			
New York Lintime	\$ 1.515		
London	\$ 1.5177 (1.5078)		
DM 2.2851 (2.2795)			
FFr 7.7537 (7.7316)			
Sfr 1.885 (1.8527)			
Y 162.936 (162.011)			
E index 93.9 (93.5)			
DOLLAR			
New York Lintime	DM 1.5102		
FFr 5.1145			
Sfr 1.2225			
Y 107.175			
London	DM 1.5057 (1.5121)		
FFr 5.109 (5.1288)			
Sfr 1.2223 (1.228)			
Y 106.965 (107.47)			
S index 96.4 (96.7)			
Tokyo close	Y 106.95		

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NEWS: INTERNATIONAL

Nuclear folly that exposed a corrupt political system

Dancing slippers lie scattered among broken toys. A picture album is open, nearby lies the first page of a grammar primer, graced by a Lenin portrait. Windows at the kindergarten are shattered, but there is no sign of life. Children's gas masks are here, too, used briefly for 36 hours, before the evacuation began.

Pripyat is the Soviet Pompeii. Its 50,000 residents slept soundly on the sultry Saturday almost 10 years ago when Chernobyl blew. The model town, a product of the nuclear age, housed the plant workers who were to build the Communist future, to surpass capitalism.

Chernobyl turned their lives upside down, and changed the world. In 1986 Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had been in power only a year. The dissenters from the Communist dream were few. The nuclear disaster, the worst in history, exposed a corrupt power. It woke up Ukraine, a nation asleep and it helped bring down the Soviet Union by enraging millions, once passive foot soldiers.

Mr Svetlan Sazankov had just turned 57

Matthew Kaminski argues that the Chernobyl accident helped bring down totalitarian rule

and was nearing retirement from the Soviet interior ministry. He ran its division in Gomel, a district north of Chernobyl, now in Belarus. Early at work that day, he says: "A friend from the plant called at 10am and told me an accident had taken place. He thought we should evacuate. But no news came from Moscow."

None came for a week. Residents in surrounding areas were told only to stay indoors, keep windows shut and not let their cows pasture. Rumours spread. The Kremlin feared panic or, worse, humiliation. Authorities denied the accident, then lied about its severity.

In the meantime the nuclear cloud, its radiation a hundred times worse than that of Hiroshima, went north and three-quarters fell on today's Belarus. Gomel got hit hardest: 80 per cent of the region, home to 1.35m, is contaminated.

Easy preventive measures, iodine supplements or early evacuation, could have

stopped the more than five-fold rise in thyroid cancer since then.

When the order to move finally came, Mr Sazankov led 15,000 other policemen in securing the 30km closed zone around the plant and evacuating towns further afield. The clean-up, like fighting a war or building a large factory, borrowed heavily from past revolutionary campaigns. Workers came in from across the Soviet Union.

"The power of friendship among Soviet people is stronger than the atom," proclaimed a banner near the fourth reactor, as it was encased in steel and concrete. Thirty-one people died putting out the fire and about 200,000 were exposed to "substantial" radiation, studies later found.

But Mr Sazankov does not feel like a hero. Today he runs Minak's Chernobyl Shield, one of the countless Chernobyl lobby groups started up after the accident. As a law and order man, a retired major general, Mr Sazankov feels uneasy putting blame higher or faulting the system he served.

Then grudgingly, he says the reactors were unsafe and the authorities acted irresponsibly. But he adds: "It was not the Soviet Union that was to blame, but the people who held power."

Soft-spoken, Tanya Oshmarova cannot hold back. Her son Ivan, now 14, spent that April at his grandparents' dacha near Chernobyl. He later joined a national dance troupe. Last year he underwent chemotherapy, which destroyed his bone marrow cancer but claimed his right leg.

Ukrainian doctors expect the jump in children's thyroid cancer to peak only in 2010. The link to other cancers has not been made. A quarter of Belarus and large parts of Ukraine are contaminated, their rich farm lands full of caesium and strontium. No one really knows what the impact might be, so people either deny the risk or live in fear, and often both.

The Kremlin in 1970 forced Chernobyl

on a reluctant, largely agricultural republic. The explosion left all in shock. Belarus and Ukraine have been trampled by history and some again accepted their fate passively, abandoning their family homes.

Anger also grew quickly. In Ukraine Chernobyl revived the confrontation between empire and nation, the centre and the outskirts, this time over the environment. It brought glasnost to the provinces. The Soviet system, once open to criticism, barely lasted another five years.

Rukh, the umbrella grouping of Ukraine's nationalists, took the gross negligence, faulty design and human error blamed for the accident and turned it into a symbol for the entire Soviet Union. Mr Yuri Sheherbak started the Green World association, later the Industrial Green Party; today he is Ukraine's ambassador to Washington.

Mr Volodymyr Holobas led Pripyat's Communist youth league, and now runs the ministry responsible for the Chernobyl

Fund, an unwieldy and expensive social protection system set up in 1990.

Mr Vladimir Danilev played a bit part, too. "I worked on nuclear safety," he says, before giving an uncomfortable laugh. He quit his job at the plant in 1991. He works for the state administration and chooses to live in Kiev rather than Slavutych, the other model town built for Chernobyl workers an hour north of the plant.

At his old Pripyat apartment, the irradiated upholstery from the furniture got torn off and removed, and he wonders by whom. He comes back rarely, each time it seems more barren, he says.

Slowly, nature is starting to reclaim the city of the future. Grass went uncut for a decade and trees are coming through the windows. This spring, birds again are migrating back to nest in the surrounding forest. Two old Ukrainian peasants, one blind, sit in a nearby village. About 700 others, mostly elderly, slipped past the military guards and moved back into their wooden houses years ago. They are the only people who live permanently in the zone.

Yeltsin backs worldwide ban on nuclear testing

By Bruce Clark and Chrystie Freeland in Moscow

Russian President Boris Yeltsin yesterday formally backed an international ban on nuclear tests on the opening day of an eight-nation summit which he is hosting in Moscow in an effort to boost his prestige ahead of June presidential elections.

But, in a sign that it still hopes to drive a hard bargain, Russia reserved the right to re-start nuclear tests if the treaty broke down and said it would not dismantle its testing installations.

Leaders of the Group of Seven industrial nations descended on the Russian capital yesterday for a summit aimed at boosting the safety of nuclear reactors, preventing nuclear smuggling and helping manage the former Soviet Union's ill-guarded stocks of fissile material.

While making the most of the summit as an implicit endorsement of his re-election bid, Mr Yeltsin also insisted that Russia would take the responsibility for safeguarding its nuclear arsenal and reaffirmed his objections to the eastward enlargement of Nato.

The western world is concerned that deteriorating economic and social conditions in Russia have led to a slackening of security, making the 900 sites where nuclear material is stored a virtual invitation to terrorists or rogue nations. But the Kremlin, while happy to accept western funding to improve safety, has remained secretive about its nuclear activities and has refused to relinquish any control.

Mr Yeltsin also used a series of bilateral meetings with western leaders to drive home Russia's continued opposition to Nato expansion and to press for Russia to be admitted as a

full member of the G7. France's President Jacques Chirac gave Mr Yeltsin some satisfaction, issuing a joint communiqué which said that Russia was "an inseparable part of the European security architecture."

The statement also endorsed Moscow's long-standing view that the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe should be the main security structure in the continent. This proposal is widely viewed as an attempt to weaken the influence in Europe of the US-dominated Nato alliance.

But while western leaders paid Mr Yeltsin the compliment of a visit to his capital, their concern that the president's pre-election profligacy might harm Russia's fragile economy was underlined by a warning from the International Monetary Fund. A senior fund official said that if Russia did

not abide by tough terms agreed with the IMF this spring it would jeopardise this month's tranche of its \$10.2bn three-year loan.

Russian officials said an IMF delegation in Moscow this week had been privately sending the same message, but a western economist close to the talks said the tough bargaining was a regular feature of the fund's monthly monitoring of Russia's economic performance.

When the summit goes into full swing today, it is expected to confirm western keenness to minimise the danger posed by the 15 Chernobyl-style nuclear reactors still in operation in the former Soviet Union. At a session due to be attended by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, western leaders are also planning to reiterate their desire to see Chernobyl closed by 2000 and to offer help with alternative energy supplies.



Brothers in arms: Yeltsin embraces Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the start of the summit yesterday

INTERNATIONAL NEWS DIGEST

China attracts more investment

Contracted foreign investment in China surged in the first quarter of this year by 86.8 per cent - to \$27.43bn - compared with the same period last year, as businessmen rushed to secure approval for new projects by an April 1 deadline.

Businessmen sought to take advantage of a "grandfather" clause that extended tax benefits to capital equipment imports for foreign-funded enterprises approved before the deadline. China's actual foreign investment also showed strong growth in the first quarter. It was up by 17 per cent, to \$7.65bn, compared with the same period in 1995.

Numbers of approved foreign-funded ventures increased by 18.5 per cent and the size of individual projects grew to \$3.2m, compared with \$1.2m last year. This reflects a continuing trend towards larger-scale projects involving Japanese, South Korean and US investors.

China's inflation continued to slow in the first quarter. Retail prices were up 7.7 per cent compared with the same period last year.

Tony Walker, Beijing

US, Japanese airlines in accord

Delta, the US airline, and ANA, a leading Japanese carrier, have agreed to share flights between Tokyo and Los Angeles from September.

The agreement between the two carriers, which have had a broad business and marketing alliance since 1986, comes as the Japanese authorities have written to their US counterparts seeking formal negotiations on civil aviation. Mr Yoshiyuki Kamei, Japan's transport minister, has written to Mr Federico Peña, requesting official bilateral talks on passenger air traffic. Japan is seeking a revision of the bilateral aviation accord, which it argues works unfairly in favour of US carriers.

Michiko Nakamoto, Tokyo

Death prompts bank probe

Financial authorities are investigating losses incurred by a Japanese banking unit in Hong Kong after its chief leapt to his death in the territory earlier this week, the unit's parent said yesterday. Yasuda Trust and Banking said Hong Kong authorities were probing the death of Mr Masayoshi Kashiwagi, acting president of Yasuda Trust Asia Pacific and acting manager of its Hong Kong branch.

Mr Kashiwagi, 54, jumped to his death on Tuesday from the balcony of his luxurious North Point apartment in an apparent suicide. Yasuda Trust said the unit had been engaged in unauthorised foreign bond deals, generating a loss of ¥1.7m (\$167,000), which was dealt with internally. The bank subsequently found the Hong Kong unit had liquidated a loss with Yasuda's banking branch in Hong Kong amounting to ¥20m.

AFP, Tokyo

Mercedes sets sights on Brazil

Mercedes-Benz, the German car and trucks group, has joined the growing list of carmakers planning to build vehicles in Brazil with the decision to invest about \$400m on a new factory at Juiz de Fora in Minas Gerais state.

The factory, which will produce 70,000 units a year of Mercedes-Benz's planned new A-Class small car when operational at the end of 1998, will employ about 1,500 workers and should create a further 5,000 jobs in the Brazilian vehicle components industry.

Mercedes-Benz's decision to locate in Minas Gerais confirms a growing trend among carmakers to site their new facilities away from São Paulo state, hitherto the centre of the Brazilian motor industry. This month, Renault of France said that its new \$1bn facility would be located in the southern state of Paraná.

Eliza Simonian, Motor Industry Correspondent

Italian editor steps down

Mr Eugenio Scalfari is to retire from editing La Repubblica, the paper he founded 30 years ago and built into one of Italy's most influential dailies. Mr Scalfari, 72, has been under pressure to step down to let a younger generation take over to compete in the cut-throat and saturated Italian daily newspaper market.

In 1992 the daily had an average sale of 728,000 but this year it is down to 620,000 with profits seriously squeezed and problems over staff redundancies. Its main rival, Corriere della Sera, has established a lead of some 80,000 copies. The succession has been handed to Mr Edoardo Mauro, who has had a successful run as editor of La Stampa.

Robert Graham, Rome

Defence chief may quit after 76 troops die in ambush

By Chrystie Freeland in Moscow

General Pavel Grachev, the Russian defence minister and one of President Boris Yeltsin's most faithful allies, yesterday offered to resign amid mounting criticism of an ambush in Chechnya in which at least 76 Russian servicemen died.

The political furor comes at a difficult time for Mr Yeltsin, who is hosting an international summit in Moscow and had

hoped to impress both western leaders and his own electorate with a display of Russia's global power.

Gen Grachev's resignation offer contrasts sharply with the aggressive rebuttals the minister has made on previous occasions when his army's performance in Chechnya has come under political fire.

Analysts speculated that Gen Grachev's softer tone could signal a weakening in the protective shield provided by Mr

Yeltsin, who could be looking for scapegoats for the disastrous Chechen conflict as he prepares to compete in June 16 presidential elections.

Chechen separatists ambushed a Russian military convoy on Tuesday. As the reported death toll climbed from the initial estimate of 26 to yesterday's figure of 76, public criticism of the Russian military for allowing the attack to take place has mounted.

Mr Yeltsin's recent peace ini-

tiative has had little visible effect on the war-torn region and yesterday he joined the bandwagon of criticism against the military, vowing to punish the commanders who were at fault.

"The military leadership is to blame and will be held responsible for what has happened," Mr Yeltsin said, according to the Russian news agency Interfax. "It is a tragedy for Chechnya, for the whole of Russia, for the Pres-

ident."

The ambush was taken up by the communist-dominated parliament, which attacked the government for its policies in Chechnya. But Gen Grachev surprised parliamentarians with his penitent response to the barrage of criticism.

"I am ready to resign if deputies consider that I am to blame for what has happened," Gen Grachev said. "I regret that I have not been able to finish off the rebels. The army

has never been trained to wage a war on our own territory."

As one of the architects of the Chechen war, Gen Grachev has been under intense political pressure to resign for more than a year. But, appearing to value the minister's loyalty above all else, Mr Yeltsin has been a firm defender. Gen Grachev proved himself to Mr Yeltsin by sending in tanks against separatism in the October 1995 conflict which threatened to unsettle the president.

French planning tougher curbs on immigration

By Andrew Jack in Paris

The French government is considering introducing legislation before the summer to toughen controls on immigration, officials said yesterday.

The ministry of the interior is working on reform proposals, while stressing in the meantime its commitment to the "firm but humane" application of existing immigration laws.

The move follows sharp controversy triggered by the publication on Tuesday of a parliamentary commission into clandestine immigration.

The Savignat report, named after the RPR Gaullist deputy who acted as secretary of the 30-member all-party commission, has created strong political divisions. It called for tough measures including repatriation of children and denial of medical assistance to those classified as illegal.

The National Assembly said yesterday it had extended its initial print run of 5,000 copies and was ordering a second edition.

The setting up of the commission is an indication of widespread dissatisfaction with the so-called "Pasqua laws" - dating from 1993 - which are named after Mr Charles Pasqua, the colourful and controversial former minister of the interior.

The laws were originally designed to clear up anomalies in immigration legislation dating from 1945, but organisations representing immigrants in France argue that after parliamentary debate three years ago, the legislation which ultimately emerged was more confusing and tougher than ever.

Some critics of the Savignat report argue that its authors are pandering to extreme right-wing sentiment, particularly at

a time of high unemployment. Even the French government is divided on the issue. Mr Xavier Emmanuelli, minister for humanitarian assistance, said it contained "unacceptable and scandalous" ideas.

The left-wing Libération newspaper said the report was using an old tactic in highlighting the issue of illegal immigration, and that if there was a real problem, it was not caused by a few tens of thousands of "clandestine" immigrants attempting to integrate but rather with the frustrations of millions of men, women and young French people.

Official organisations suggest that there are 200,000-350,000 illegal immigrants in France, with one former adviser to Mr Pasqua suggesting 30,000 new ones enter the country each year.

Ironically, Mr Pasqua himself said last week that he was not convinced of the need to revise his laws, but rather to apply the ones he had introduced more effectively.

The government appears to have decided that taking a tougher line on immigration is politically attractive. Mr Jean-Louis Debré, the interior minister, last year relaunched in earnest charter flights to repatriate illegal immigrants rapidly.

He has also made great play of the number of people without proper papers identified during the "Vigipirate" security exercise launched following the terrorist attacks to hit France last summer.

Meanwhile, Mr Alain Lamassou, the government's spokesman, said last week that the Savignat report had some merits which deserved public debate, while refusing to commit himself to endorsing its proposals.



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صكنا من الامم

Chinese welcome Korea talks plan

By David Brown in The Hague

China yesterday gave a tentative welcome to US proposals for four-way peace talks aimed at resolving tensions on the Korean peninsula.

Mr Qian Qichen, Beijing's foreign minister, said the Clinton administration proposal for talks involving the US, China and both Koreas was reasonable but added that it would require participation by all parties "directly concerned," a reference to communist North Korea.

Mr Qian's remarks came in connection with his meeting in The Hague yesterday with Mr Warren Christopher, US secretary of state. The meeting was set against the background of sharply deteriorating Sino-US relations, with disagreements between the two powers on nuclear testing, arms proliferation, market access, intellectual property rights, Taiwan and human rights.

Mr Qian said the US and China should "agree to disagree" on several difficult issues at this "crucial juncture" and concentrate on finding "common ground".

Mr Christopher said: "We have a common commitment to a non-nuclear Korean peninsula and to a resumption of dialogue between North and South."

Relations between the US and China have been on a downward spiral since the Chinese sought to intimidate Taiwan by holding military exercises in the run-up to its March 23 presidential elections. The US dispatched two aircraft carriers to the region in response.

Mr Christopher urged resumption of talks on the Taiwan issue, which he characterised as "a matter to be resolved by parties on both sides of the Taiwan Straits on a peaceful basis".

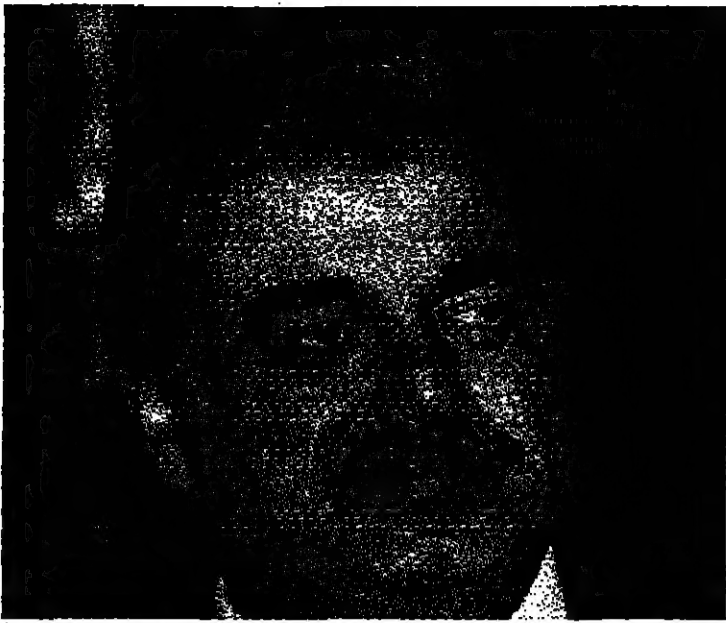
Beijing has also expressed concern about the recent US-Japanese security deal, and Mr Qian said yesterday that this could "give rise to big problems," particularly if it were extended to the whole of the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr Christopher said the US was "disappointed" with the "lack of progress" on human rights but reaffirmed US commitment to extending China's Most Favoured Nation trading status.

Lebanese trapped in the middle France presses on with peace efforts

Powerful neighbours restrict Beirut's ability to manoeuvre, writes David Gardner

By David Buchanan in Paris



The clock is ticking: Hariri is to start talks with Hizbollah

International efforts to get a ceasefire in Israel's nine-day-old offensive against Islamist guerrillas in southern Lebanon gathered pace yesterday, after Thursday's carnage in Qana and Nabatiyeh, where Israeli shells and rockets killed at least 107 Lebanese civilians.

But Lebanon itself, which for the past quarter-century has had its destiny shaped by powerful neighbours using its soil and sectarian divisions to fight out their differences, was examining what limited margin of manoeuvre it has to bring that cycle of violence finally to an end.

It did not like what it found. Lebanon and Syria both told US mediators yesterday they were willing to work towards a ceasefire, according to the US State Department.

Mr Shimon Peres, Israeli prime minister, said he was willing to halt military operations once Hizbollah, the Shia Muslim militia fighting Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, stopped firing Katyusha rockets into northern Israel. And Mr Rafiq al-Hariri, Lebanon's prime minister, said he was starting talks with Hizbollah on a ceasefire, but that these could take several days.

Syria, which has 35,000 troops in Lebanon controlling security since the end of the 1975-90 Lebanese civil war, holds the key. It was in Iran's embassy in Damascus that the pro-Iranian Hizbollah was created shortly after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

After the end of the Lebanese civil war, Beirut, with Syrian backing, dismissed all the competing militias except Hizbollah, which soon acquired cross-community legitimacy as a national resistance movement.

"People are not for Hizbollah, they are against Israel," said a senior Lebanese official, "and its habit of using Lebanon as a regional battleground over the past 20 years."

The Shia fundamentalist militia is still financed by Iran, but has grown its own deep roots in Beirut's impoverished southern suburbs and the Syrian-controlled Bekaa valley in the east. Only Damascus can rein Hizbollah in.

It was in Damascus, therefore, that Mr Hervé de Charette, the French foreign minister, and Mr Ali Akbar Velayati, his Iranian counterpart, were talking yesterday, shortly to be joined by Mr Warren Christopher, US secretary of state, and Mr Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian foreign minister.

According to Hizbollah sources in Beirut, Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, the movement's spiritual guide, is also in Damascus. Mr de Charette said he was optimistic about an early ceasefire, but Lebanese officials were much more circumspect.

Both the US and France have put plans on the table.

The US plan, backed by Israel, wants a cessation not only of Katyusha attacks on the Galilee but also of resistance to Israeli forces inside the so-called "security zone" amounting to 10 per cent of Lebanon's territory, and the dismantling of Hizbollah. In return, Israel would begin discussing withdrawal from Lebanon after an incident-free nine months.

France, more modestly, wants a written and Syrian-backed version of

the understanding brokered by the US after Israel's last venture north of the Lebanese territory it occupies in 1993. This committed Israel and Hizbollah to refrain from attacking civilians.

Lebanon says it is looking for a synthesis of the two positions, but senior officials see traps in both. Mr Hariri said yesterday that attempting to disarm Hizbollah after Thursday's massacre of civilians by Israeli shells at a UN refugee shelter in Qana would amount to "political suicide". The root of the conflict, he insists, is continuing Israeli occupation.

He and his government are wary of quick fixes leaving Israel in the "security zone".

A ceasefire after the 1993 invasion led to the departure from Beirut of the Palestine Liberation Organisation - Israel's current peace partners - but also led to Israel's permanent occupation of the South, and failed to prevent the onslaughts of 1993 and this week.

Both Beirut and Damascus, moreover, feel the US plan is a statement of Israeli war aims, and of the Amer-

ican and Israeli agenda well beyond Lebanon's tenuous frontiers.

A senior Lebanese official says the US and Israel not only want to neuter Hizbollah, but to drive a wedge between Syria and Iran - tactical ally to Damascus, embodiment of international terrorism to Washington - and eradicate Iranian influence from the Levant.

Hizbollah is Iran's main vehicle in the Arab world. According to a senior Arab official, Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, yesterday called on Hizbollah to step up its operations against Israel. "There's a real problem because Iran wants to force the US to discuss directly with them," the official said.

Hizbollah is at the same time one of Syria's main weapons for exerting pressure on Israel.

In stalled US-mediated talks with Israel, Syria has held out for the return of all the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights in return for peace.

President Hafez al-Assad also wants any deal with Israel to strengthen his country and his minority Alawite regime. "Damascus wants them [Hizbollah] to fight for a regional role for the Syrians," said one Lebanese government official.

Israel, he adds, also finds Hizbollah a convenient excuse to pursue diplomacy by other means against both Syria and Iran. "The only party without a stake in Hizbollah is the [Lebanese] central government in Beirut," the official argues.

Beirut fears that in this situation, a ceasefire alone will resolve little, even though officials know that Syria would never cede to one aim implicit in the US plan - that Lebanon start negotiating peace with Israel separately from Damascus, an Israeli aim since its first adventure in Lebanon in 1978.

"If it's just a ceasefire, the situation for Lebanon will deteriorate," one official argues. "People don't want an end to the fighting, they want a clear agreement." That still looks as though it will be a long time coming.

Peres's crucial test, Page 9

France is persisting with its Middle East peace mission in the belief that it can complement US diplomacy by providing contacts and a realistic basis for a ceasefire between Israel and the Hizbollah guerrillas, diplomats in Paris said yesterday.

Mr Hervé de Charette, the French foreign minister, yesterday took his Middle East peace shuttle back to Damascus, where he is to stay until today. He is expected to meet Mr Ali Akbar Velayati, his Iranian opposite number, in the Syrian capital, the diplomats said. Unlike France, the US has no relations with Iran, which exerts considerable influence over its fellow Shia in Hizbollah.

Before leaving Tel Aviv for Damascus the French minister expressed confidence that "in the next 24 or 48 hours the secret, confidential discussions under way on all sides should lead to a truce", adding that "for several days we have been working in full co-operation with the Americans and we are seeking the same goal". Parisian diplomats admitted the French initiative had at the start of the week caused some difficulties with the US but since Wednesday France had been in regular consultation with the Clinton administration, whose special representative, Mr Dennis Ross, is now in Israel.

Paris fears that Washington may be trying to pack too much into a ceasefire, making a quick truce therefore harder to obtain. While it may be possible to get the 1993 "understanding" between Israel and Hizbollah to avoid civilian targets written down in black and white, French diplomats doubt the wisdom of the US demand that Syria should be a direct signatory of a written agreement. Even if Damascus could be persuaded, its signature on a south Lebanon agreement would require Lebanon to concede that it is only a Syrian protectorate.

President Jacques Chirac has made his concern for Lebanese sovereignty a main plank of France's "new Arab policy", and in the wake of the Cana bombing yesterday, he

promised Lebanon that France "will remain at its side". France believes that while Syria has an important part to play in a ceasefire, its public role in a truce should remain indirect.

France also believes the US peace plan may be too ambitious by linking a ceasefire to a pledge by Lebanon and Syria to enter overall peace talks with Israel.

French officials believe France can help the US in the Middle East, and that a general improvement in the two countries' relationship means that French moves can no longer be interpreted as motivated by anti-Americanism. France acknowledges the desire for US negotiators to play a solo game, but believes that French diplomacy can put more cards in the US negotiators' hands.

Complaints by some of France's European Union partners that Paris is itself playing a solo game in the Middle East are shrugged off in the French capital. Mr de Charette informed the Italian presidency of the EU of his mission, which was endorsed by senior foreign ministry officials of the 14 EU members last Monday.

Diplomats freely admit that the EU's foreign policy machinery, which involves assembling a "troika" of ministers representing current, past and future presidencies of the EU is not operational in this sort of crisis. Mrs Susanna Agnelli, the Italian foreign minister, flew to Israel yesterday, having failed to get her Irish and Spanish colleagues in the EU's current troika to accompany her.

In the EU's intergovernmental conference, France wants the EU to appoint a high-profile troubleshooter to steer its general foreign policy, as Mr Carl Bildt, the former Swedish premier, did in Bosnia. But even after such a change, it is not clear that in this crisis President Chirac would have waited for the EU to dispatch its "Mr Bildt". The reason is that among EU members France stands alone in wanting to - and thinking it can - do something concrete about the situation in southern Lebanon.

Hopes for progress at Quad ministers' telecom talks

By William Dawkins in Tokyo

Trade negotiators from the US, Japan, Canada and the European Union yesterday failed to resolve differences over a plan to liberalise global telecommunications, but a Japanese official said progress was "highly likely" in ministerial talks this weekend.

Senior officials yesterday

ended a two-day meeting in Kobe without agreement on the proposed abolition of restrictions on foreign ownership of national telecommunications companies.

It is one of the chief barriers to wider accord on the scheme, under negotiation in the World Trade Organisation, and now nearing the last chance for agreement by a self-imposed

deadline of April 30, less than two weeks away.

They did, however, appeal to countries around the world to open telecommunications markets to international competition.

The officials' meeting had clarified what needed to be done by trade ministers of the four Quad powers when they meet today and tomorrow to

try to form a common front in the telecommunications talks, said a Japanese official.

If ministers do succeed in resolving differences, they aim to put pressure on about 30 other countries involved in the talks - including some of the world's fastest growing telecommunications markets - to fall in behind them.

If achieved, a WTO telecom-

munications accord would reduce prices and costs in a world telecoms market worth more than \$500bn annually.

Collapse would be widely seen as a blow to the credibility of the WTO, which is in need of a clear trade success after narrowly averting failure in last year's talks on financial services and running into difficulties in another set of

current negotiations, designed to liberalise the shipping market.

The plan, promoted by the four Quad powers plus Korea, Australia and New Zealand, has been under discussion since March 1994.

It would reduce barriers to international competition and promote competition by setting binding rules to ensure fair

access by companies to public telecommunications networks and to outlaw unfair discrimination by dominant carriers.

Japan put forward an improved liberalisation offer early this week, but the EU and the US are both pressing for more. Canada remains reluctant to lift its curbs on foreign ownership of telecommunications companies.

Japan feminists fight to keep their surnames

Both feminism and individualism go down badly with Japan's older generation. They argue that the two ideals are harmful imports of the west, promoting deterioration of family values and creating chaos in society.

So no surprise that the country's older MPs, nearly all of them male, have started a campaign to stall a proposed revision in the marriage law which will allow married couples to have separate surnames, currently forbidden by Japanese civil legislation.

The proposed changes, which the justice ministry initially intended to pass through parliament during the current session, are chiefly designed to give women a choice in keeping their maiden names once married. While the civil code lays down that a married couple must choose the husband's or wife's surname, 98 per cent of married women have chosen to take on their husband's surname. A stigma usually attaches to a man taking the name of a woman's family.

An increase in women with careers who are reluctant to change their names once they marry, and a rise in individualism leading to a desire to keep one's surname, has prompted calls from women for a change in the civil law.

Many companies have started to allow married women employees to call themselves by their maiden names if desired. But some of the more conservative corporate groups, government ministries and state-run universities reject such requests. When a woman professor at a state-run college took her employer to court in 1988 for refusing to accept the use of her maiden name, she lost her case.

The old guard complains that allowing couples to have different surnames could lead to a breakdown of the family and even promote an increase in crime. They refer to countries including the US, UK

and Sweden as places where individualism has led to a confusion of values.

"The sense of a family as one group will be hurt by the revision," claims Mr Masajuro Shiohara, head of the general council of the Liberal Democratic party, main member of the ruling coalition. Mr Yasuhiro Nakasone, former prime minister and an LDP elder, says Japan is not ready for such individualism. The New Frontier party, the leading opposition grouping, is also split over the issue.

The current legislation is based on the feudal or family system, where the family's estate was inherited by the eldest son, with women marrying into their husband's family. Although the system was officially abolished after the second world war, the influences remain strong. Women who have eagerly been waiting for the changes are outraged by the intolerance of the elderly MPs and their linkage of separate surnames and social disruption. "There is a jump in logic. It will give the wrong image to people who do not know what the changes really are," says Ms Minho Fukushima, a lawyer calling for the revision.

Ms Fukushima, a mother of one child who has not officially registered her marriage in order to keep her maiden name, points out that opposition among some ordinary people stems partly from ignorance. "Couples with the same name will not be deprived of any rights that they have now," says Ms Fukushima.

The justice ministry, which had initially hoped to pass the bill through this parliamentary session, now says that a concrete agenda for the revision does not exist. Mr Shiohara of the LDP says as it took the justice ministry five years to come up with the proposal there should be another five years of debate over them.

Emiko Terazono

Freeport mine challenged on environment

By Maruella Saragosa in Jakarta

Freeport Indonesia, the Indonesian unit of the US mining company Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold, has made considerable efforts toward improving environmental management at its Grasberg mine in the remote province of Irian Jaya, a team of environmental auditors concluded yesterday.

The audit, conducted by Dames & Moore, the US environmental consultancy agency, was commissioned by Freeport at the instigation of Indonesian authorities. Freeport hopes it will damp criticism from pressure groups about the environmental impact of the Grasberg mine, one of the world's largest copper, gold and silver mining operations.

"We are confident that this report will correct a lot of the misinformation," Mr Paul Murphy, Freeport Indonesia's executive vice president, said. Last year, Freeport Indonesia had \$100m in political risk insurance cancelled by the Overseas Private Investment Corp, a US government agency, which said Freeport's mining operations were causing "substantial adverse environmental impact".

In what company officials described as "fair criticism", the auditors noted that until recently, Freeport Indonesia was "slow to meet its environmental challenges adopting a reactive rather than proactive response" to environmental challenges. However, that had changed since exploitation of the Grasberg deposits started - a move which more than quadrupled the mine's production capacity.

The auditors identified the disposal of tailings from the mine into rivers as the most "visible, unsightly and most critical issue".

The tailings, although non-toxic, are "unwelcome" to the tribes who live in the villages around Tembagapura, the



town close to Grasberg, and have damaged rainforest.

However, the auditors described Freeport's plan to develop a tailings storage area using levees as an "acceptable solution". The levees project will cost the company \$25m in capital expenditure and a further \$12m a year to maintain.

The auditors added that Freeport Indonesia should establish an environmental advisory team with independent members on its board in order to "reinstill an atmosphere of trust". They noted, however, that environmental damage in the area is not limited to mining activities but also caused by logging and the Indonesian government's transmigration programme, where people from the populated island of Java are moved to provinces.

Other recommendations included a study of potential liabilities from neglect of waste management in the past, greater commitment to study the region's fauna and flora in order to assess the mine's impact on biodiversity and formulating a detailed mine closure plan.

Freeport has already implemented some of the recommendations made by the audit team and is "studying" the remainder.

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COMPANIES AND FINANCE

QMH to sell a third of its hotels

By Christopher Price and David Blackwell

Queens Moat Houses yesterday put a third of its UK hotels up for sale in order to pay off some of its £1bn of debts.

The 25-hotel portfolio, which is understood to carry a price tag in excess of £100m, went on the market as Millennium & Copthorne priced its flotation at more than £400m.

Both prices were at the top of market expectations and were seen as underlining the revival of the UK hotels sector.

Queens Moat Houses, which underwent a £1.3bn restructuring last year after coming close to bankruptcy, said the disposal of its 19 County brand three-star hotels and six four-star Moat Hotels was part of its strategy to focus on a smaller, higher value portfolio.

After the sale, Queens Moat, once the UK's second biggest hotelier, will be left with just 52 hotels. There are another 71 hotels in continental Europe.

However, analysts cast doubt on whether the company would be able to sell the portfolio at its asking price. Such a

price would equate to £53,000 for each of the 1,700 rooms up for sale, which was described as "aggressive as a starting point for negotiations" by Mr William Barney, head of hotel consultancy at KPMG, the accountants.

This figure compares with the £35,000 a room paid by Regal Hotels for the former Forte White Hart chain, which are also rated mostly three star, last month.

However, Queens Moat pointed out that the County brand was of a higher standard than the White Hart chain, and

that the portfolio also included the six higher graded Moat House hotels.

It claimed the asking price was "extremely realistic in the present environment".

No single offers would be considered for the hotels and no other Moat House units would be put up for sale, the company said.

It also stated that no pressure had been put on the company by its banks to make the sale.

Potential purchasers of the Queens Moat hotels could include Principal and Lyric

Hotels, two fast-growing middle market hotel chains, and Greenalls, the pub and hotel group.

Queens Moat said the board had met the secretive Incentive Investments, based in Zurich, which has recently taken a 13 per cent stake in the hotel group. The directors were said to be "relaxed" about the intention of the investment group, which has a reputation for investing in recovery situations.

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and Christie & Co have been appointed to handle the sale.

Move of CK Chow to GKN confirmed

By Tim Burt

GKN, the motor components, defence and industrial services company, yesterday confirmed that Mr CK Chow, a divisional director of BOC Group, would be joining as chief executive later this year.

Shares in GKN rose 9p to 992p after it said Mr Chow would be leaving the industrial gases group to succeed Sir David Lees, who is splitting the role of chairman and chief executive next year.

Mr David said the appointment reflected GKN's international aspirations, adding that Mr Chow's knowledge of overseas markets, particularly the Pacific Rim, would complement existing boardroom expertise.

BOC, meanwhile, said Mr Danny Rosenkrantz, chief executive, would take over Mr Chow's role as managing director of BOC's gases division, accounting for 75 per cent of group profits.

Some industry observers claimed Mr Chow had been expected to leave ever since BOC promoted Mr Rosenkrantz from running the vacuum technology division to the top job last year.

Mr Chow, who is joining GKN initially on a three-year rolling contract, denied his move was motivated by pique. "I didn't go looking for this job, they approached me," he said. "I have a strong sense of loyalty towards the people at BOC."

He also played down suggestions that he lacked experience in engineering, pointing out that BOC's gases division included a turbine and compressor engineering capability. "I've had 12 or 13 positions at BOC and that has given me experience in some areas that overlap with GKN's

NEWS DIGEST

Phytopharm to raise £11.9m

Phytopharm, which makes drugs from non-plant-based medicines, said it would raise £11.9m in money, net of expenses, by floating a quarter of the company.

It announced a placing price of 175p a share, valuing the company at £54.1m.

After the placing, the directors will own about 21 per cent of the shares. Mr Richard Dixey, chief executive, will own 10 per cent.

The funds will be used to pay off a £2.6m loan from El Holdings, develop Phytopharm's products and start producing quantities of Zemaephyte, an eczema treatment.

Phytopharm made pre-tax profits of £132,000 (£139,000) and sales of £641,000 (£1.1m) for the six months to February.

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Gold price finds support

Millennium float values hotels group at £402m

By David Blackwell

Millennium & Copthorne, the hotels group owned by CDL Hotels International, yesterday completed its flotation at the top end of expectations, giving it a market valuation of £402m.

The 64.7m new shares, which were placed with institutions, were priced at 278p, raising £174.5m net of expenses.

CDL, part of the Singaporean Hong Leong group, has retained approximately 55 per cent.

About £100m of new money will be used to reduce year end debt from £283m, while the balance will be used to repay non-interest bearing inter-group debt.

Mr Kwok Leng Beng, chairman, said the flotation had met with "a very good response" and had been priced at the higher end of the expected range. He rejected any suggestion that CDL should have sold more of the group - "we are long-term investors and this

business is growing rapidly, so we are very happy".

The prospectus includes a sentence that Millennium's articles of association contain provisions "intended to ensure that the company is at all times capable of operating and making decisions independently".

Last year the group, which owns 23 hotels in the UK, US, France and Germany, made profits before interest and tax of £35.8m on sales of £158.9m.

The national net dividend of 4.7p represents a gross yield of 2.1 per cent at the placing price. Based on pro forma net assets at the end of the year, gearing would be about 31 per cent.

Sponsor to the float was Barclays, the broker was NatWest Securities. Dealings start next Thursday.

COMMENT

The news from the hotel sector has all been good recently - Stakis put out a strong second



Kwok Leng Beng: CDL is a long-term investor, and this business is growing rapidly, so we are happy

quarter trading statement earlier this week. Granada last week announced that it was putting up prices at its London hotels by 15 per cent, and this last month reported a 50 per cent rise in 1995 profits. Shares in Macdonald Hotels, floated

last month at 145p, closed yesterday at 213p. Hotel stocks are going through the roof, so the strength of this flotation - understood to be 10 times subscribed - should not be too surprising. The shares are bound to move some way

north of 300p on Thursday. On 1996 pro forma earnings of 18p, the prospective multiple is still only 15.5. While the Millennium & Copthorne hotels are a mixed bag, they do offer the chance of a pure hotel play in the four-star market.

Halifax buys £340m business from Paribas

By Alison Smith, Investment Correspondent

Halifax Building Society is making a further acquisition on its way to flotation, with the purchase of the £340m UK residential mortgage business of Banque Paribas, the French bank.

The sale marks Paribas' departure from the UK mortgage market which it entered in 1988. Last summer, Compagnie Bancaire, a Paribas subsidiary, sold UCB Home Loans to Nationwide building society for £85m.

The deal, announced yesterday, will mean that Halifax acquires the share capital of the business - Bracehold Limited - and its nine subsidiary companies, but does not take on the business's infrastructure or its 12,000 staff. Halifax Loans - the society's centralised lending subsidiary - will now have assets of just over £3bn.

The acquisition is the second Halifax has announced within the past month. In late March, it announced plans to buy Clerical Medical, a mutual life insurer, for £600m.

While this deal is clearly much smaller-scale - though neither party would disclose the price - it is a further sign that Halifax does not want to allow the lengthy process of becoming a bank to prevent it doing deals along the way.

Like other overseas banks, Paribas found the fast-growing UK mortgage market attractive in the late 1980s. Like others, however, for whom residential lending was not a core operation, Paribas has decided to leave this market in the wake of the early 1990s recession, the slump in house prices and the fall in demand.

Among those departing has been Banque Nationale de Paris, whose centralised lending business with £1.5bn in mortgage assets was bought by Halifax early last year.

Much more recently, Salomon Brothers, the US investment bank, has invited offers for The Mortgage Corporation, its UK residential mortgage lending arm.

Halifax said yesterday that the 6,800 mortgage holders with Bracehold have been paying a standard variable mortgage rate of 8.75 per cent.

This is more than one percentage point higher than standard rates charged by mainstream high street lenders. Halifax intends to

reduce it to 8.45 per cent from the beginning of June and will then keep it under review.

Bristol & West defends £600m tag

By Roland Adburgham

Lord Armstrong, chairman of Bristol & West, yesterday defended its proposed £600m takeover by Bank of Ireland against suggestions that the building society was being sold too cheaply.

At a crowded annual meeting, attended by about 300 of the society's members, few seemed much concerned by the loss of the society's mutual status, or of its sale to a foreign bank. But there was clearly support for one investor, Mr Fergus Lyons, when he said:

"Bank of Ireland has undoubtedly got hold of this society for a knockdown price."

Another member said the society had made a pre-tax profit last year of £77m and the price paid was only about eight times earnings. "It seems to me that Bank of Ireland is getting a bit of a bargain," he said.

Other investors complained that the amount to be distributed was low.

Lord Armstrong replied that the deal had "not been forced upon us by the necessity of events" and the board unanimously believed it was in the

society's best interests. He called it a "win-win transaction" which would create "a strong and competitive new force in the British retail financial services sector".

The price, he said, reflected the society's value. It was "fair and full" and the society's advisers agreed. Referring to what one woman called the "foreign status" of the Bank of Ireland, he said there were positive advantages in selling to that bank in retaining Bristol & West's own identity. The management and branch structure would be virtually

unchanged and it was not expected there would be any compulsory redundancies.

Lord Armstrong said it was estimated that for investors of two years' standing or more, and with balances of £100 or more, the minimum cash payment would be about £1,000.

The deal, announced on Monday, will have to be approved by members at a special meeting, held probably early next year. On the evidence of yesterday's meeting, opposition has yet to gather pace.

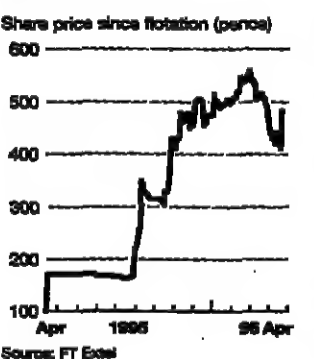
Biocompatibles Intl to raise £50m

By Daniel Green

Biocompatibles International, the medical company floated a year ago, is to raise £50m in a rights and warrants issue.

The cash raising exercise was accompanied by an optimistic statement on the company's prospects, news of corporate alliances and figures for 1995. The shares, which were floated at 170p, rose 74p to 494p.

Biocompatibles employs a special material to coat medical devices implanted in the body by surgeons. The implants include stents - spring-loaded metal cylinders that can hold open constricted arteries. The material is slippery and so resists accumulating deposits and bacteria. It is also being used to make contact lenses.



The issue is on a 1-for-6 basis at 380p a unit comprising one share and one warrant. The issue will raise about £28.5m net of expenses and before the exercise of the warrants.

Every five warrants entitle a warrant holder to buy three shares at 500p each between July 9 1996 and February 14 1997. If they are exercised, the company will raise a further £23.5m.

The rights issue has been fully underwritten by Merrill Lynch. Dealings in the nil paid shares is expected to start on May 8.

Figures for 1995 showed turnover rising from £1.9m to £2.75m. The pre-tax loss rose from £2.79m to £2.88m thanks to increased spending on administration as new products were launched.

Mr Alistair Taylor, chief executive, said that the company had signed collaboration agreements with large drugs companies, Novo Nordisk of Denmark, in insulin, and Chiron of California, in eyecare.

Biocompatibles looks like a perfect high-tech investment. It has an exciting new technology that should find a ready market and, unlike biotechnology companies developing drugs, regulatory approval times are short and products are already on the market. The business should be profitable from early 1996. But investors should not be fooled. Maximum sales of medical devices are much lower than those for successful drugs. Investors have snapped up Biocompatibles shares as enthusiastically as those in young drugs companies offering much higher maximum returns - the shares have almost tripled in the past year. Further rises could be triggered up by profit-taking. Investors should expect a bumpy ride.

M&G sides with BET against Rentokil

By Tim Burt

M&G Investment Management yesterday gave its public backing to BET as the business services group stepped up its campaign against a £2.1bn takeover bid from Rentokil, the industrial services group.

The fund manager, which holds 7.5 per cent of BET and normally backs defending management in hostile bids, rejected Rentokil's offer and said BET had better prospects

by remaining an independent company.

Rentokil, however, said BET had failed to allay concerns over current trading and the future of its cleaning, catering and personnel divisions, which it has admitted are non-core.

"BET shareholders deserve better," said Mr Clive Thompson, Rentokil chief executive. "It is time that they had the benefit of the improved performance from their businesses."

BET, meanwhile, pointed to a letter from M&G to Sir Chris-

topher Harding, its chairman, in which the fund manager praised the restructuring strategy of Mr John Clark, chief executive, and welcomed the expectation of future growth.

"We believe BET has very attractive prospects and look forward to the long-term benefits that we believe will accrue to our investors from BET remaining independent," it added.

M&G admitted that the decision to allow publication of the letter was unusual, but said it

was happy at the disclosure.

Advisors to BET hinted that other leading institutions were ready to reject Rentokil's overtures, with as many as five of its top shareholders likely to back independence.

Rentokil will publish next Friday the level of acceptance to its cash and paper offer. It has offered nine new shares and £10 cash for every 20 BET shares, plus a 4p dividend. That valued BET shares at 211.7p at last night's close. BET shares fell 24p to 203p.

More tenants help Clarke Nickolls rise

An increase in letting levels and rents helped Clarke, Nickolls & Coombs, the property investment and management group, increase full year pre-tax profits by 25 per cent, from £1.31m to £1.51m, writes Joan Gray.

Pro forma net asset value stood at 9.52p (9.39p) at December 31, and a low tax charge, due to 217m tax losses carried forward, helped lift earnings per share from 0.66p to 0.82p.

The advances were achieved against a background of reduced market activity. "We specialise in a very hands-on approach," said Mr Colin Walker-Robson, finance director. "We have got 500 tenants and a rent roll of £5.5m, so we are able to manage our portfolio actively and help tenants move to the most appropriate properties."

The company also increased lettings and reduced the level of voids, particularly in industrial properties.

Nikko Securities lifts forecast

Nikko Securities yesterday cited a strengthening stock market as the reason for an increase in forecast earnings for the year to the end of March. Recurring profit - before extraordinary items and tax - was expected to have reached ¥65bn (¥398m) for the year, against a forecast last autumn of ¥50bn. Nikko, one of Japan's "Big Four" stockbrokers, said operating revenues were expected to be ¥285bn, against an earlier forecast of ¥275bn. Last year, the company reported a ¥1bn loss, on revenues of ¥200bn. Earnings on commission for investment trusts and stock transactions had increased as trading activity on the stock market rose sharply, it said.

Gerard Baker, Tokyo

Redland duo told to publish

Both Redland and Ennemix yesterday accepted a ruling by the Takeover Panel instructing them to make available to the other a breakdown of the valuation figures of Ennemix assets each has offered following Redland's bid.

The panel became involved when the companies complained about each others' valuations and about references to such work in announcements, and documents sent to shareholders. It has also recommended the two send a circular to Ennemix shareholders today, with their respective arguments and breakdowns.

Last week Ennemix rejected Redland's improved offer of 35p a share, valuing it at £6.4m. Ennemix said its net asset value is 50p a share.

RESULTS

	Turnover (£m)	Pre-tax profit (£m)	EPS (p)	Current dividend (p)	Date of payment	Dividends Corresponding dividend	Total for year	Total last year
Biocompatibles Int'l	3.75 (1.9)	8.98 (2.79)	21.25 (4.45)	-	-	-	-	-
Clarke Nickolls	8.95 (6.37)	1.51 (1.21)	0.82 (0.68)	0.15	July 24	0.11	0.27	0.2
Craxion Ltd	3.1 (3.98)	0.133 (0.052)	0.18 (0.07)	0.15	July 24	0.11	0.27	0.2
Jacks (William)	87.9 (74.5)	0.82 (0.75)	2.59 (4.4)	1	July 4	1	1.75	1.5
Sillegay (HG)	13.6 (12.5)	0.442 (0.344)	33.3 (23.8)	12	July 3	9	15	12
United Securities	5.36 (5.8)	0.945 (0.67)	22.8 (58.2)	4	May 28	6.667	8	6.667
Union	1.07 (0.51)	0.053 (0.03)	2.65 (1.08)	-	-	-	-	-
Investment Trusts								
	NAV (p)	After-tax dividend (p)	EPS (p)	Current dividend (p)	Date of payment	Corresponding dividend	Total for year	Total last year
Emerging Mkts Country	55.41 (48.96)	0.323 (0.003)	4.01 (0.005)	0.4	-	-	0.4	-

Figures shown basic. Dividends shown net. Figures in brackets are for corresponding period. 10% increased capital. 1981 exceptional credit. 1981 stock. 1981 dividend after 1981 for

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

FINANCIAL TIMES

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Saturday April 20 1996

Getting away from it all

Kenneth Clarke has so much to look forward to as he boards a plane to Washington this morning to attend the International Monetary Fund's spring get-together. For starters, there will be his traditional - 100 per cent BSE-free - American sirloin steak in downtown DC. And, of course, the obligatory update on the local jazz scene: another favourite.

Regrettably, Mr Clarke will also have to slot in the odd fraught meeting with his international colleagues. But even these have the advantage that they will not be about the three issues which plague him at home: tax cuts, interest rate reductions and the election.

The news on the first two was pretty dire this week - at least for a prudent chancellor such as Mr Clarke. Many Conservative MPs appear to be under the impression that they "allowed" the chancellor to get away with announcing a mere 50bn-worth of tax cuts last year, in return for a promise of more significant giveaways the next time. Yet, on the basis of the economic data released this week, Mr Clarke has precious little space for any tax reductions in 1996 - let alone large ones.

On Thursday, it was revealed that the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement for 1996-98 came to £22.5bn, or around 4.5 per cent of GDP. This was 50p higher than Mr Clarke predicted in November, and £9bn more than forecast last summer. The chancellor made an effort to reassure, promising that the PSBR for 1996-97 would come in "well under" £30bn. But, just 18 months ago, he said it would be £13bn.

Borrowing overshoots of this magnitude have become such a regular feature of UK economic policy over the past few years that the bond markets were only temporarily perturbed by the news. But the fact that the poor performance was anticipated does not make it any less undesirable.

Growth pause
Mr Clarke claims, with increasing frequency, that he will only cut taxes when the country can afford it. The suspicion, however, must be that he will use the same arguments as last year to defend an even larger package of pre-election tax cuts in November (or even sooner, in the event of an early election). He might argue that borrowing is still on a downward path, and that the goal of actually balancing the budget has nearly been achieved, yet again, by unexpectedly weak economic growth.

It is notoriously difficult to distinguish a cyclical deterioration in

tax revenues from a structural one. The bulk of the £2.2bn overshoot was due to lower than expected tax revenues, some of which, in turn, can indeed be explained by the recent growth pause. But there is growing evidence that a good part of the 1995-96 shortfall - like those which preceded it - falls into the structural category.

Revenues from VAT, in particular, have been disappointing the Treasury for several years now, for reasons which seem to have little to do with either the pace or composition of economic growth. The implication is that, when the economy recovers, revenues may not catch up all of the ground lost in previous years. Budget balance would then be put off indefinitely.

Modest giveaways

Given the uncertainty involved, a compensatory fiscal tightening would probably be an over-reaction, not to mention a political impossibility. But for Mr Clarke to sanction anything more than modest giveaways in the budget would be imprudent in the extreme.

This argument is further strengthened by recent evidence of a recovery in consumer demand, at least in the service sector. A survey released this week by the Chambers of Commerce reported that sales and employment growth among service sector companies were the fastest in at least five years in the first quarter of the year.

Taken alongside the recent signs of life in the housing market, and the continued rapid growth in broad money, the survey suggests that Mr Clarke may not even get the consolation of a further interest rate cut.

True, the manufacturing sector is still languishing. Mr Clarke might argue that he needed to reduce interest rates again to kick-start this side of the economy. But the chances are that he would then find himself under even greater pressure to raise them again later on in order to meet the government's inflation target.

The inflation data for March contained little suggestion of an upsurge in price pressures. But nor, disappointingly, did it indicate that inflation was now safely on the way down. As the IMF argued in its latest survey of the world economy, the industrial economies - the UK among them - should recover by the end of the year. That is the good news. But sooner than that, Mr Clarke will need to break the bad news to his party: that this gives him little room to prime the pre-election pump.



An olive branch to the right

A new alliance aims to end the demonisation of the left in Italian politics with victory in Sunday's general election, says Robert Graham

The Roman aristocracy may be confused how to vote in tomorrow's Italian general election, but they still know how to give a good party. This was evident when Contessa Donatella Pecci Blunt threw open her magnificent 16th-century palace in the heart of ancient Rome to 300 guests on Thursday night.

The gala occasion was to wind up the election campaign of her old friend Mr Lamberto Dini, the caretaker prime minister who has formed his own small party, Italian Renewal. Amid the candle-light and antique tapestries, Mr Dini laid out his political credo to the occasional sound of a champagne glass breaking in the crush.

"I'm a moderate," he said. "By inclination I lean towards the right and I identified with the alliance [formed by Mr Silvio Berlusconi, Romano Prodi, the Bologna economics professor, to head the alliance was another move towards the centre]."

He went on to explain how he felt betrayed by his former colleagues who did their best to sabotage his government last year. "The responsible ones were the centre-left alliance who supported my government in the national interest without asking anything in return. I therefore owe it to them to support their Olive Tree alliance."

The real danger to Italian democracy, he added, was the National Alliance (AN) of Mr Gianfranco Fini - the main partner of Mr Berlusconi. He said Mr Fini had failed to shake off the fascist past of his party, while his corporatist economic policies risked pushing Italy further from the core of Europe.

Five years ago, the Pecci Blunt guests would have been voting for the now-defunct Christian Demo-

crats or for the neo-fascist MSI, the predecessor of Mr Fini's AN. The first because they controlled the levers of power; the second out of nostalgia for the Mussolini era. These are not typical voters. But as Sunday's poll approaches - Italy's third general election in four years - the battle for their allegiance is typical of the broader contest.

At its simplest, the election campaign has been a propaganda battle to persuade those on the right to find electoral salvation under the umbrella of the left. Given that the left has always been identified with the Communist party and has never held power in the post-war era, much prejudice has to be overcome.

A key first step to end the demonisation of the left was the formation of the Olive Tree alliance at the initiative of the progressive wing of the old Christian Democrats last year. The choice of Mr Romano Prodi, the Bologna economics professor, to head the alliance was another move towards the centre.

The addition of Mr Dini, until two years ago a seasoned central banker, has further changed the complexion and appeal, making the Olive Tree an alliance for government that commits Italy to fiscal discipline and compliance with the criteria for joining European economic and monetary union.

The two broad coalitions of the centre-left and the right are running very close. Publication of opinion polls is banned during the campaign. But numerous private polls by the parties and business organisations have circulated. The latest show the Olive Tree at around 46 per cent, 3 per cent points ahead of Mr Berlusconi's Freedom Alliance, with the populist Northern League of Mr Umberto Bossi doing

well, alone, at 8 per cent. Such polls do not include almost one third of the electorate who are undecided after an uninspiring campaign. Moreover, the margin of error makes confident prediction difficult.

Nevertheless, Mr Massimo D'Alema, leader of the PDS, has dropped his normal caution and predicted the centre-left will definitely win the 315-seat senate. But the race for the 680-seat chamber of deputies is much more open, and the Berlusconi alliance could win the largest number of seats.

Given such uncertainty, the financial markets have been sanguine throughout the campaign. The lira has even strengthened on a combination of the Berlusconi alliance being unlikely to win an outright victory and the country's economic fundamentals continuing to improve. By the same token, a right-wing victory would alarm the markets because of the poor record of the Berlusconi government, the possibility of a destabilising confrontation on the sensitive issue of justice and because of AN's reluctance to privatise.

In the March 1994 general election, Mr Berlusconi's Forza Italia movement successfully filled the political vacuum left by the collapse of the Christian Democrats and Socialist parties in the wake of corruption scandals. The media magnate-turned-politician successfully played on Italians' fear of the left and presented himself as a breath of fresh air in the political establishment.

However, Mr Berlusconi no longer represents the new, and is currently on trial for corruption. He has failed to resolve the conflict of interest between his role as a politician and his ownership of three TV channels, and has allowed the political agenda to be set by Mr Fini to his right. Mr Fini is openly seeking to dislodge Mr Berlusconi. "He is no longer a silent, unruffled friend of Berlusconi, waiting to win political legitimacy," commented the newspaper *Il Foglio*, run by Mr Giuliano Ferrara, who writes many of Mr Berlusconi's speeches. "He is playing for the leadership (of the right-wing alliance) in earnest."

The polls show AN at close to 20 per cent of the vote, slightly above Forza Italia. If confirmed this would automatically make Mr Fini the senior partner and could well lead to Mr Berlusconi deciding he has had enough of politics.

But the leadership problems in the Freedom Alliance are not limited to the ascendancy of Mr Fini. Mr Berlusconi's current corruption trial, and three others in the pipeline related to the alleged illicit activities of his Fininvest business empire, mitigate against him being another prime ministerial candidate. Equally Mr Fini's neo-fascist past make him an unlikely candidate for the premiership in the short term.

Voters confused by the leadership problems on the right could be forgiven for being equally unclear regarding the centre-left. The most powerful figure here is Mr D'Alema, but he has ruled himself out for the time being because of his communist past. Mr Prodi, the nominal candidate, suffers from being seen as too much under the shadow of the PDS and Mr D'Alema. He is also challenged by Mr Dini who insisted on creating his own party rather than agree to be wholly under the

Olive Tree. Mr Dini has a proven track record in office which risks undermining Mr Prodi.

The centre-left has scored during the campaign by looking more purposeful and sober. Mr Berlusconi and Mr Fini have, in contrast, lost credibility for making rash promises on job creation and tax cuts. But the weak point of the Olive Tree remains the dependence on the votes of Reconstructed Communism (RC), formed from the hardline of the old Communist party. RC accounts for about 8 per cent of the vote or almost 40 seats in the chamber of deputies. Without their tacit support, a parliamentary majority is impossible on current poll projections. Yet their very presence frightens off the moderates.

Another potential ally is Mr Bossi's Northern League. But here both alliances seem determined to avoid the kind of blackmail exercised on the formation of government by the Catalans in Spain. They would prefer to do a deal to exclude the League rather than be at the mercy of Mr Bossi, who has campaigned on a secessionist ticket.

Indeed, if the elections produce the expected close result, it is quite possible to envisage two scenarios. The first would find the two alliances getting round the table to put together a grand coalition. This would make it easier to tackle the necessary constitutional reforms and put public finances in order. Alternatively, there would be an attempt to create a centre government by breaking up the two alliances and drawing elements from each, as well as the League.

Such scenarios merely underline that this election will not provide a quick answer as to how Italy's next government will be formed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Global focus will be on the Greenwich observatory in heralding millennium

From Mr Richard Ormond.
Sir, Christopher Price's well-balanced piece on Greenwich's millennium plans ("Time is against fundraisers for the millennium", April 13) neglects to mention the role of the National Maritime Museum and, more important, the Old Royal Observatory in the commemorations. While the museum fully supports the plans for a millennium exhibition on the Greenwich peninsula site, plans are already well in progress to mark the millennium in historic maritime Greenwich, whether or not the peninsula event occurs.

In the Old Royal Observatory, Queen's House and National Maritime Museum, set among 200

acres of Greenwich Park, Greenwich has a spectacular ready-made site of international repute for millennium celebrations. Since the millennium officially begins for the world on the prime meridian in the courtyard of the observatory, the global focus will be on that historic building when the millennium arrives.

The museum recently announced a raft of millennium plans, including a time and space exhibition, bringing together important artifacts from international museums, and a series of initiatives for national and local businesses under the banner, Greenwich Meridian 2000. The museum has also signed a

contract with Initial TV to produce a series of millennium events including a 24-hour live event on December 31, 1999 and a live global music-based event in the grounds of the museum.

Coupled with the development of the museum following a recent heritage lottery fund award and the expansion of public access to the Royal Naval College, Greenwich will be in a very healthy state for the year 2000, regardless of the events on the peninsula.

Richard Ormond,
director,
National Maritime Museum,
Greenwich,
London SE10 9NF, UK

Maintaining integrity of manager and message

From Ms Yvonne Bension.
Sir, Lucy Kallaway is right to applaud the findings of the *Harvard Business Review* - that the most meaningful communication at work is between employees and their immediate supervisors ("Two's company, 23's crowd", April 15). She ignores other factors senior managers need to bear in mind if they are to communicate effectively with their people.

Inconsistent messages spread through an organisation create confusion and disappointment. And top managers need to demonstrate their commitment to the words being spoken in team briefings and individual discussions.

Managers at all levels who "tell it like it is" win trust, and help build better understanding of a business among employees. Managers who regard communication as a crude PR exercise risk losing their integrity as well as people's goodwill. Some mission statements may cause amusement; this does not mean that a corporate vision need be meaningless.

These issues have to be managed strategically at the top, not muddled through piecemeal in semi-detached units. Communication with employees is more than a Gradgrindian exercise in the dissemination of "facts".

Yvonne Bension,
director, policy and development,
The Industrial Society,
48 Eryman Square,
London W1R 7LN, UK

No need to be disparaging

From Mr John McCulloch.
Sir, It wasn't necessary for Gerard Baker ("Letter from Tokyo", April 13/14) to be so disparaging about Japanese television broadcasting in his lead-in to what was, in the end, an article with some good points on the latest embarrassment to corporate Japan in the form of the TBS/Aom Shinrikyo scandal.

Japanese television may seem "banal" to foreigners, whether or not they understand the content (does Mr Baker?), but it obviously satisfies its community.

John McCulloch,
4-12-30-308 Nishi Azabu,
Minato Ku,
Tokyo, Japan

Too many lawyers on board

From Mr Anthony O.R. Mitchell.
Sir, The recent report by a prominent legal firm in London to the Lloyd's validation steering group is, I trust, the last of many hurdles Lloyd's will have to jump before the final Lloyd's settlement offer will become acceptable to most of Lloyd's Names.

The report relies on the opinions of no fewer than 18 leading counsel (QCs) and six lesser local luminaries in reaching its conclusions supporting the settlement offer.

When one adds the long lists of lawyers who were involved in the many court actions, Lloyd's groups, inquiries, commissions and parliamentary hearings during the past 16 years since the Albert Hall Worldwide meeting, one wonders why the legal problems appear to

grow rather than reduce. One is reminded of Pythagoras's fifth law: the number of legal problems in any deal is equal to the square of the number of lawyers consulted.

Is not the good ship Lloyd's, (insured, of course, at Lloyd's) in danger of foundering through an overloading of lawyers and is it not time to make them walk the plank?

One is also reminded that the philosopher Pythagoras also believed in the transmigration of souls.

Anthony O.R. Mitchell,
Holly Cottage,
5 Hillview,
Leisure Isle,
Knysna 6570,
South Africa

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Men in the News • Manchester United

On target for larger goals

Michael Thompson-Noel and Patrick Harverson on the league leaders

Sixty-eight minutes into a crucial home match against Leeds United this week, Manchester United's manager, Alex Ferguson, irritated by the wretched performance of his £7m striker, Andy Cole, ordered Cole off the pitch and sent on a substitute.

Two minutes later, Roy Keane slammed home the goal that kept Manchester United on top of England's FA Premiership football league. Thus ended another successful night in the long, lustrous history of what (many believe) is the world's most famous sports team.

Not its best sports team. Manchester United are not even Europe's best football team. But they are rich and apparently well-managed. And they are undergoing metamorphosis.

Today's Manchester United is a publicly quoted football and leisure business that owns one of the best English club teams seen in a generation. However, by early next century, it may have evolved into something far grander: a sports-leisure-media combine with tentacles stretching deep into cyberspace.

This has been an extraordinary season for English football. A keenly contested league championship has been a fitting prelude to England's big-

gest sporting occasion since it staged football's World Cup 30 years ago: its hosting of Euro 96 (the finals of the European football championship) from June 8 to 30. And Manchester United has been in the thick of the action.

It is on course to win the vaunted double of Premiership title and FA Cup for an unprecedented second time. Things could still go awry: it could lose the Premiership to Newcastle United, another extremely wealthy club, and next month's FA Cup final to Liverpool.

Yet nothing, it seems, can dim Manchester United's fame or glamour. Football clubs used to be viewed as dodgy investments. But since 1981, when it was floated on the stock market, Manchester United has transformed itself as a business and as a football club.

As a result, its share price has soared from 53p to 331p, raising its market capitalisation from £31m to £200m.

As the club has grown, its shareholder profile has

changed. Initially regarded as an emotional investment for avid fans, Manchester United has become popular with City institutions and professional investors.

Football is the world sport, and in Britain, Manchester United, like other top clubs, has benefited from a wall of new money, primarily from television rights, sponsorship and merchandising.

It is run by a close-knit, five-man board. The non-executive chairman is Professor Sir Roland Smith, a veteran of many boardrooms, while the two executive directors are chief executive Martin Edwards and finance director Robin Lauder.

Edwards and Lauder are as different as chalk and cheese: Edwards microscopically familiar with the club's history and culture, Lauder cool and analytical.

The club has a non-playing

staff of approximately 280 and a playing squad of around 40, including one of Europe's most charismatic stars, Frenchman Eric Cantona, and 22-year-old ex-boy-wonder, heart-throb Ryan Giggs of Wales.

The volatile Cantona used to be a pain. In January 1995, he punched a Crystal Palace supporter, and was severely punished. But this season, Cantona has been an inspiration to his colleagues, and has scored numerous match-winning goals to push Manchester United ahead of Newcastle, the long-time leaders of the league.

In turn, Giggs - tutored by Ferguson, the shrewdest of managers - has fulfilled his promise. Giggs could always dribble and outpace defenders. Now his passing and tackling are sharper, and Ferguson has improved this natural left-footer's ability to pass with his right foot.

Like Cantona, Giggs is lavishly rewarded. He says that he is a "quiet lad" who likes to stay at home in the evening

and is uncomfortable if harassed by screaming admirers of either sex.

But the tabloids rate him Britain's highest-paid football star, with annual earnings thought to approach £2.5m, and a possible price tag - were he for sale - of £10m.

Manchester United can afford to pay its huge wages bill. It was the first big English football club to benefit from virtuous financial growth. As the players won trophies, more supporters paid to watch them in action in a large modern stadium; more of the club's games were televised; more fans spent large sums on United merchandise; and more sponsors and advertisers threw money into the ring. Revenues climbed. More money was available to strengthen the squad. The team stayed successful. In the past five years, the club's annual revenues have risen from £10.8m to £60.6m, and profits from £2.4m to £20m.

Nor is Manchester United slowing down. Recently it

completed a new three-tier North stand at its Old Trafford ground, raising capacity to 55,300; signed a £6m licensing contract with VCI to sell its video and magazine publications; and renegotiated a record-breaking, £60m, six-year kit sponsorship deal with the sportswear company, Umbro.

Under the Umbro and VCI deals, it received much of the money up-front and neither greatly depends on the team's performance over the life of the contract.

Finance director Robin Lauder said last November, three months and eight days into the club's current financial year: "By today, we have covered all our costs for the year." Few other companies, whatever their business, could make such a boast.

Manchester United will be an obvious founder member of the elite European club competition that should emerge soon, buttressed by cascading pay-per-view TV revenues. Eventually there will be a world league.

A Manchester United theme park is mooted. It may diversify into other sports. And, as virtual-reality technologies come along, fans of the future will be able to take the field in cyberspace with stars like Eric Cantona or Roy Keane, or spend the evening with Ryan Giggs.



The way out of the wilderness beckons for the opposition Labour party, riding high in the opinion polls and gooding a government with a majority of only one. Yet even as the ruling Conservatives contemplate opposition, Mr Tony Blair, the Labour leader, is being constantly reminded that political power and party unity will not go hand in hand.

After 17 years of Tory government, Mr Blair presides over a shadow cabinet lacking executive experience and whose members often seem driven by personal rivalry. The lessons learnt from the defeat in the 1992 general election about the dangers of over-confidence and rash remarks have pushed most differences under the carpet.

Yet there have been several ominous eruptions. Last week Ms Clare Short, shadow transport secretary, suggested that anyone earning more than a backbencher - £24,000 (£51,255) - might pay higher taxes. She was immediately slapped down for breaking the party's code of silence on tax, designed to reassure the middle classes that they would not pay more under Labour.

Ms Short's defenders admit her remarks were badly timed. Yet they are resentful that Mr Blair's entourage, comprised mainly of appointed advisers, appears to set the agenda for senior MPs to follow. Ms Short proclaimed she would not be silenced. Another line had been drawn in the sand.

The 54-strong shadow cabinet may be fractious, but in policy terms it is reasonably united. The same cannot be said for the 273-strong parliamentary party. The most serious rebellion so far was on March 14. Labour had traditionally opposed the Prevention of Terrorism Act on civil liberties grounds. This year its MPs were instructed to abstain, but 23 defied the party line and voted against. "If you think of the damage John Major's small awkward squad have caused over Europe," says one Blair loyalist, "I fear we haven't seen anything yet."

The next assault will come in the elections to the shadow cabinet, due in November, an uneasy ritual of factional horse-trading. Last year Mr Blair had foisted upon him a team far from his ideal choice.

Sweet and sour

Keeping Labour united is a challenge for Tony Blair, says John Kampfner



This year threatens to be worse. The two members most likely to be voted off are Mr Jack Straw, shadow home secretary responsible for the new line on terrorism, and Ms Harriet Harman, health spokeswoman, who has been undermined by the row over her decision to send her son to an academically elite grammar school in spite of Labour's hostility to selective education.

Mr Blair has in the past retained allies in the shadow cabinet even when they have been voted out. A close friend of Mr Blair suggests he will play the long game. "He's unlikely to put up a fight over Harriet this time," he says. "But I would be surprised if she wasn't in the government."

Mr Blair is not a man to enjoy the backbiting that is part of Westminster life. Most negative stories about Labour MPs leaked to journalists come from within the party. The main rivalry is between Mr Gordon Brown, shadow chancellor, and Mr Robin Cook, shadow foreign secretary. By far the most persuasive speaker at the despatch

box Mr Cook believed he was sidelined when given the foreign portfolio. Mr Brown has made himself unmovable from heading the Treasury team.

In addition, Mr John Prescott, the deputy leader, has complained of being excluded from key decisions. Then there is Mr Peter Mandelson, MP for the northern seat of Hartlepool. He is nominally number four in Mr Blair's team, but it is he who has Mr Blair's ear.

Mr Blair's aides say that, assuming he wins the election, he will set out with largely the same team. "Tony's is a meritocratic approach," says a close adviser. "It's not a question of modernisers versus the old guard." Among the very few with experience even of junior office are Ms Margaret Beckett, now at trade and industry, and Ms Ann Taylor, shadow leader of the house. Even though neither is close to Blair, he would be loath to ditch older hands too quickly.

To help prepare for government, the shadow cabinet is being sent on regular weekend seminars on leadership and administration. Mr Blair regularly consults Lord Callaghan, the last Labour prime minister, who has warned him of the mistakes made by previous Labour governments.

For all the preparation, a new Labour government could be stymied by personal rivalries, and fundamental splits on policy, especially over Europe and public spending.

Mr Blair's aides are preparing for a difficult first administration. In an attempt to keep a grip, power will probably be centralised wherever possible. A recent book by Mr Mandelson provides several clues, including his suggestion of a strengthened prime minister's department.

Mr Mandelson does not say whether there should be a deputy prime minister - a job resurrected by Mr Major for Mr Michael Heseltine - leaving Mr Prescott wondering about his role. Mr Mandelson calls for "a non-ministerial political manager" at Downing Street, a job many would say tailor-made for him. He also talks of "super-ministers" in charge of broad policy areas, an idea that would please the likes of Messrs Cook and Brown but ruffle the feathers of their rivals. Keeping Labour's factions sweet will be one of the toughest challenges Mr Blair has to face.

Shimon Peres is facing a crucial test of his leadership, writes Julian Ozanne

The bitter harvest of a bombardment



Pain for prayer: Israeli soldiers yesterday at an artillery base on the border with Lebanon

For the first time in his premiership, Mr Shimon Peres yesterday faced demonstrations by the very constituency he most wants to lead - left-wing peace activists.

Up to 200 protesters opposed to continuation of Israel's devastating nine-day bombardment of Lebanon gathered in Jerusalem singing peace songs and holding signs which said "Israel out of Lebanon now".

The demonstration, sparked by Israel's massacre of more than 100 Lebanese civilians at a UN base on Thursday, pointed to how far Mr Peres has strayed from the figure of a humanitarian world statesman seeking to lead his people to a new vision of brotherly peace with Arab neighbours by the turn of the century.

Yet the small attendance at the demonstration also showed that Israelis, even those in the left-wing peace camp, remain deeply ambivalent about Israel's offensive in Lebanon. And, in spite of a growing feeling of shame and sorrow about civilian casualties and gathering international outrage, Mr Peres's popularity before the elections on May 29 remains undiminished by the war in Lebanon. His international credibility is much more likely to be damaged than his standing back home.

In the last three months Israelis have seen too many Jewish bodies on the streets of Israel and have felt impotent to answer the attacks by Islamic terrorists," said Mr Danny Ben-Simon, a senior commentator at the left-wing Davar-Rishon newspaper. "This feeling of impotence was a great disadvantage to Peres and he had to act. That is why he has been supported by the country."

Earlier this week 62 per cent of Israelis rated Mr Peres's performance in the bombardment, known as Operation Grapes of Wrath, as good.

However, contrary to the expectations of many pollsters who believed the Lebanon offensive would bolster Mr Peres's popularity, the prime minister has so far failed to increase his lead over right-wing opposition leader Mr Benjamin Netanyahu. Opinion polls yesterday showed Mr Peres leading by between five and 10 points over Mr

Netanyahu and a large majority of those polled said the Lebanon blitz had not influenced voting intentions.

Pollsters said the results proved many Israelis believed the operation had failed, so far, to achieve its military objective of preventing rocket attacks against northern Israel by pro-Iranian guerrillas.

"It is still too early for the Israeli electorate to make definitive judgments about Mr Peres's performance because we are waiting to see how it will end," said Ben-Simon. "But the tradition in Israel is that wars don't harm governments."

Furthermore, even if the Israeli mood continues to sour against the Lebanon operation, the change is unlikely to manifest itself in support for the opposition. Mr Ariel Sharon and Mr Raphael Eitan, two senior leaders of the right-wing opposition coalition, have advocated extending Israel's

occupation zone in Lebanon all the way to the Litani river as an alternative to the government's blitz. Such a policy would drag Israel further into Lebanon and involve the commitment of many more ground troops and the occupation of many Shia Moslem villages.

Most Israelis remember the high casualties and ineffectiveness of Israel's disastrous 1982 invasion of Lebanon and are deeply reluctant to go down that road again.

The prospect of the right wing benefiting from the crisis has enfeebled left-wing opponents of the offensive.

"We are a very weak and divided voice. We are reluctant to turn opposition to the war into opposition to the government 40 days before elections," said Mr Arnon Arie, a peace activist at yesterday's demonstration. "We have no ability to force the government into a ceasefire. The only hope is that a ceasefire

will be imposed from outside." Yet it is the terms of a ceasefire and the extent to which it is imposed on Israel which will be the greatest challenge for Mr Peres and present the gravest danger to his domestic standing.

After eight days of round-the-clock aerial and artillery shelling, Israel's military goals remain unmet. Hizbollah has continued to send rockets crashing down into Israeli settlements near the Israel-Lebanon border. And Thursday's massacre, and the worldwide horror and condemnation it provoked, have fundamentally changed the dimensions of the conflict and severely limited Mr Peres's ability to continue bombing until Syria, Lebanon and Hizbollah accept the tough formal written ceasefire Israel proposed through the US earlier this week.

The intense international pressure being exerted on the government now, particularly by Mr Bill Clinton, the US president, Mr Peres's closest ally, may force Israel to come to terms quickly. Mr Peres's best hope now is that the July 1993 "understandings" committing each side not to attack the other's civilians, which ended Israel's last Lebanon blitz, can be revived and modestly strengthened. But this was the option he rejected earlier this week in favour of a bolder ceasefire agreement embracing a halt to Hizbollah attacks on Israeli military targets and long-term commitments by Lebanon and Syria to disarm the Hizbollah.

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If Hizbollah, Syria or Lebanon refuse to play ball now or refuse to consolidate the July 1993 understandings Mr Peres will be left with an ugly stalemate as election day nears.

Israeli commentators said the real test of Mr Peres's performance would come this weekend as he seeks a difficult and favourable exit from the quagmire in which Israel now finds itself. He must show he is capable of standing his ground and proving to Israel that he can protect the security of its citizens while moving swiftly to halt the offensive.

"If you weigh the internal political factors the result of this operation on Mr Peres's popularity will depend on the agreement," said Mr Arie. "If the agreement increases Israel's security he will win, if it does not he will lose."

An appearance of weakness or capitulation is the one thing that the opposition could seize upon. Mr Netanyahu is already poised for attack at any sign of government compromise.

Close allies to the prime minister said Thursday was the worst day of his premiership as he came pouring into his office with condemnation. Mr Peres lashed out at the critics, saying Israel was not "bloodthirsty" and only sought to defend its citizens.

That line may well be swallowed at home but abroad the images of horror at the UN base will linger. Mr Peres may yet reap a bitter harvest from Operation Grapes of Wrath as he tries emerge as a pre-eminent peacemaker of the late 20th century.

Could the US dollar again become a "hard" currency as it was after world war two when it formed the foundation for the Bretton Woods exchange rate system?

The notion of permanent dollar strength will strike most economists and currency traders as utterly absurd. In the past 25 years episodes of dollar appreciation have been (rightly) regarded as temporary aberrations. In the long run, a steady depreciation against the D-Mark and yen has been seen as an inevitable consequence of the US's relatively high inflation rate, disappointing productivity growth, and chronic tendency toward trade and budget deficits.

The attitude of successive US administrations - either that the dollar does not matter or that depreciation is good because it helps exporters - has also fostered a negative view of the currency.

The typical interpretation of the dollar's recent recovery is that it is another temporary appreciation, a compensation for excessive weakness, especially against the yen, last year. Several factors are seen as conspiring to support the dollar.

The Japanese authorities have finally embraced the monetary, fiscal and regulatory policies necessary to lift their economy out of a semi-depression. This has led to a

Hidden strength behind the dollar's rise

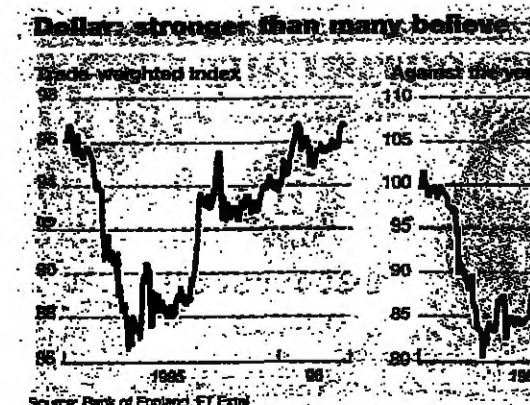
The US currency's recovery may not be a short-term phenomenon, argues Michael Prowse

rapid decline in the Japanese trade surplus, which was seen as the main cause of excessive yen strength. Its dollar rate has accordingly weakened from a peak of about ¥80 a year ago to ¥107 today.

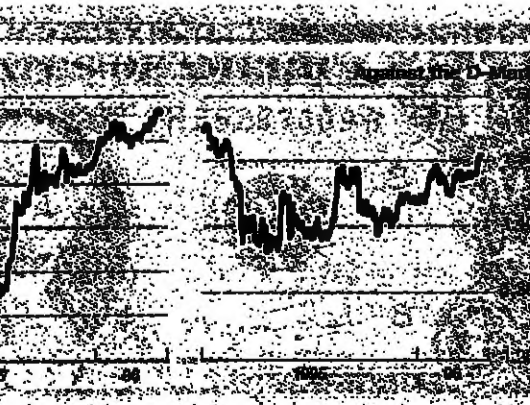
The Bundesbank's love of a strong D-Mark, meanwhile, has been tempered by the unexpected weakness of the German economy this year. It has come to realise that depreciation is precisely what the economy needs if it is to recover. Hence this week's interest rate cut.

Events in the US have conveniently reinforced these trends. A couple of months ago, economists feared the US economy was heading for recession. But subsequent economic data - for employment, production and consumer demand - proved stronger than expected, prompting speculation that the Federal Reserve might have to tighten monetary policy later this year to prevent an acceleration of inflation.

Analysts have also been heartened that the US trade deficit has fallen more rapidly than expected: from a monthly peak of more than \$11bn last summer to about \$7bn, partly reflecting the strength of exports.



At the same time, the Clinton administration has adopted a more responsible public stance on the dollar. In the early years, officials talked the dollar down to put pressure on Japan in trade disputes. They have long since kicked that bad habit. Indeed, Mr Robert Rubin, the treasury secretary, seems to have convinced the markets that he really does favour a stronger dollar. Fortunately for him, the currency's appreciation has been so gradual



that nobody on Capitol Hill has even noticed it: the export lobbies have thus been silent. The stage appears to be set for further dollar appreciation, especially against the D-Mark. Mr David Bulchundran, a currency economist at Morgan Stanley, the US investment bank, expects the dollar to gain about 10 per cent to 15 per cent against the D-Mark over the next 12 to 18 months, taking it to DM1.65 to DM1.70. He thinks appreciation

against the yen will be more modest, given the progress already made, but the dollar could still test ¥115 to ¥120.

But will this be yet another temporary dollar rally? Should long-term investors continue to favour the D-Mark and yen?

There are at least three reasons for rejecting conventional scepticism about the dollar. The first is that the US should no longer be regarded as soft on inflation: the

Fed has shown a sustained commitment to price stability in nine years under Mr Alan Greenspan. His renomination as Fed chairman suggests it will continue to put a priority on holding down inflation. Official figures do not capture the full improvement in the US's price performance because the consumer price index overstates inflation by as much as a percentage point.

The second ground for optimism is the industrial renaissance in the US. After extensive restructuring American business is leaner and fitter than for decades. Productivity growth in manufacturing since 1980 has exceeded that in either Japan or Germany - and the US started from a higher base. US companies have gained a commanding lead in many new technologies such as computer software and telecommunications.

The underlying improvement in competitiveness is evident in soaring corporate profits, in export performance and in the extraordinary strength of US equity markets.

A third reason to be bullish about the dollar is the changing fiscal climate, both within the US and relative to other large economies.

According to the IMF, the US structural budget deficit is now 1.7 per cent of national income, about the same as Germany's and lower than Japan's, which has risen to 2.2 per cent. More significant, the IMF expects the US to make more progress than either of its main competitors in reducing the deficit over the next five years.

Looking further out, US budgetary pressures appear less severe than in Japan or Germany: the net present value of public pension liabilities, for example, is less than 30 per cent of GDP in the US against more than 100 per cent in Japan and Germany. This means demographic pressures on the budget will be less severe in the US than in its rivals. Over time, therefore, it is probable that saving/investment imbalances will swing in the US's favour, supporting the dollar.

There are still grounds for caution. The dollar's role as an international reserve asset could decline further, reducing its allure. The US current account deficit, a modest 2 per cent of GDP, will not disappear overnight.

But the bottom line is that if a nation keeps inflation under control, raises its saving rate by limiting budget deficits, and outperforms its competitors industrially, its currency is likely to appreciate. The US is doing just this, which is why dollar strength may not be short-lived.

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	Ind. Mkt.	Int'l Mkt.	Index	Index	Index	Index
Morgan Guaranty Investment Pkts Ltd (12/20/92)						
500 Financial Dividend Income ECFM 1st						
12/1	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/2	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/3	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/4	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/5	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/6	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/7	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/8	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/9	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/10	100	100	100	100	100	100
12/11	100	100	100	100	100	100
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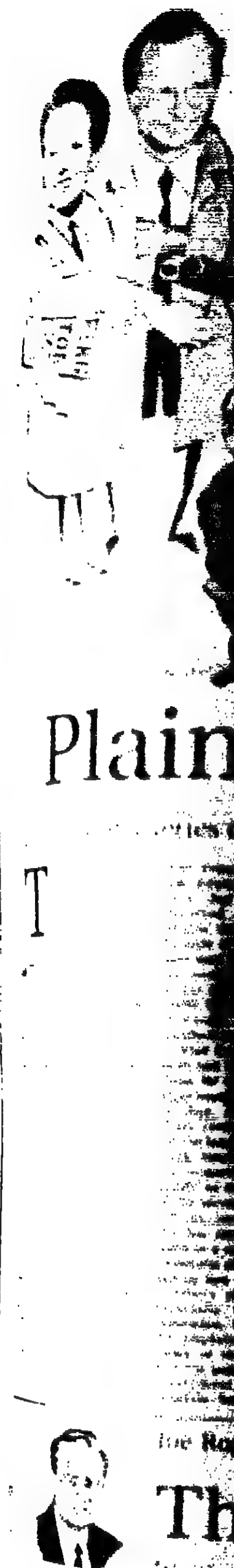
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Weekend FT



Plainclothes royals on parade

In the first of a series on European monarchs, Christian Tyler asks how these family firms will survive the millennium

The view from the Lord Chamberlain's window was blocked by a black-and-white Baldrick ferryboat which, from a nearby quayside, towered over the delicate Amalienborg palace. In the square below, the Queen of Denmark's guards ambled back and forth in pairs, gossiping, their rifles casually cradled.

Images such as these remind the visitor accustomed to the pomp of the British royal house how small and informal the Continental monarchies have become. Informal they are, certainly; but they are also jealous of their position and dignity. And they are perpetually conscious of the balance they must strike in order to survive.

For Queen Elizabeth II, who is 70 tomorrow and is the longest reigning of the seven European monarchs, the view from Buckingham Palace may be a lot grander. It is also a lot grimmer.

This week Elizabeth's second son, Andrew, was divorced from his extravagant duchess, Charles, her heir, is in the process of negotiating his divorce

from Princess Diana. Her third son, Edward, is unmarried, and only her more discreetly divorced daughter, Anne, retains the mantle of dignity. In spite of all this, the succession may be safe. Yet the British monarchy, once the most secure in Europe, is staggering under the accumulated weight of scandal, rumour and public disaffection.

Other European royal houses have had their scandals, sometimes far worse than anything experienced by the House of Windsor. And yet in none of these countries - Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Norway - is the monarchy being asked to justify its existence at the end of the second millennium.

Every constitutional monarchy has similar problems and there is a surprising degree of consensus among the continentals on how to cope. Today's plainclothes royals, especially those with long experience, have to overcome the temptation to impose their views of the nation's needs over the policies of the elected government. They have to maintain family discipline in

an age when other parents seem unwilling to do so. They have to live in a style that distinguishes them, but not lavishly. They have to get close to their people, but not too close, and they have to cope with an increasingly intrusive press. Finally, they have to arm themselves against the possibility that nature will deal them a genetic bad hand and give them heirs unwilling or unfit for the task.

Over the next six weeks the Weekend FT will be visiting each of these countries to examine what kind of contrast it is that allows the anachronistic hereditary principle to survive in parliamentary democracies.

The answer for Santiago Carillo, former head of the Spanish Communist party, was political expediency. His decision to support King Juan Carlos after General Franco's death was ideologically unsound and supremely pragmatic. "The question was not whether we chose between a monarchy and a republic," he says now. "We chose between democracy and dictatorship."

The civil war veteran, who

had dismissed Franco's royal successor as a puppet and an imbecile, dubbing him "Juan Carlos the Bribe", has had to eat his words. The king not only created a democracy but faced down an attempted military coup, and retired into the background once democracy looked secure.

Why people in such "republican" countries as Sweden tolerate a royal family is more a question of psychology than politics, according to Björn Samuelson, an MP of the far left in Stockholm. "All I know is that they are making very good PR for themselves."

These royal heads of state are no longer monarchs in the original meaning of the word. They scarcely even deserve the title of "king" or "queen": few wear crowns or go through coronations. They have transmuted themselves into what another Swedish parliamentarian described as "a kind of hereditary presidency". "And why not?" this MP added. "It may be unnatural but the alternative may be worse."

If they are presidents, they are presidents whose authority relies not only on birth, but on

mystique, tradition and good example, palace officials say. Their strongest card is that they are not tarnished by a political record. They are the focus, as in the Low Countries, of a public need that politicians can never satisfy.

If they are wise they will take care, as in Spain, the Netherlands or Norway, not to become identified with any social set. If they are clever they will look at the longer term - it is there where their heirs will have to live.

That is why in Sweden I was told that if King Carl XVI Gustaf - a dull king - ran for president he would probably get it: why the speaker of the Danish parliament said of Queen Margrethe, "She does the job better than I could"; and why a young Social Democrat MP in the Netherlands could declare, "If the Dutch wanted a president, they would probably choose the Queen."

But the hereditary system has a serious flaw: biology.

"If the genes work well, fine. But it is a risky business being dependent on your genes," said Olof Ruin of the University of Stockholm's political science

department. In the days of absolute rulers, genetic weaknesses were tolerated. But would the protection of his court have been enough to save the insane 18th century King Christian VII of Denmark in the television age?

Biology also means sex and marriage. Where these can have constitutional implications it is not surprising that press and television should take an interest. The continental press may be more restrained than the British tabloids, yet photographers are not afraid to chase after royal girlfriends or boyfriends. "It's legitimate because of the succession," said Norway's leading palace-watcher, Kjell Arne Toiland of the gossip weekly *See and Hear*.

Continental editors are afraid of losing readers for gross invasions of privacy, so tend to report only public misdemeanours. They do not dig

for evidence in those countries where there are rumours of homosexuality and illegitimacy. If they are more indulgent about the affairs of their monarchs and the escapades of their crown princess - the car crashes, nightclubbing, affairs with models - it is because, they say, their societies are more open, their public less puritan and the families more "normal" than in Britain.

Perhaps in a small country self-restraint is easier. King Olaf V of Norway, grandfather of the present King Harald, used to say: "I have four million security guards." Journalists confirm that Norwegians do not ring up the newspapers if they see the royals out shopping, or try to sell pictures of them, as might happen in Britain. There are signs, however, that even in Scandinavia self-restraint is getting weaker.

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Joe Rogaly

The poor? What poor?

It's time for less talk from politicians on poverty and more action

There is no end to the wonders of British politics. The working class has been abolished. The left has been airbrushed out, to be replaced by the centre. An attempt has been made to excise the poor from our minds, as with a Soviet encyclopaedia.

These are substantial achievements. The first credit goes to John Prescott. The deputy leader of the Labour party, proud of his origins as a steward on sea-going ferries, has declared himself middle-class. He is right: an MP's salary places him or her above the average. The second miracle was accomplished by Mr Prescott's boss. The New Labour party, Tony Blair declared in New York, was a party of the centre. Hey presto!

The third trick is turning out to be a trifle more awkward. Most of us, living comfortably or nearly so, squirm a little when the talk turns to poverty. We do not wish to believe our eyes as we pass beggars in the street. We forget the anecdotal evidence. It is fashionable, when confronted by poverty statistics, to analyse them to death.

It was therefore refreshing to hear Robin Cook say on Wednesday night that "Labour must speak for the poor". The shadow foreign sec-

retary and deep-cover advocate of the party's more radical thoughts, went further. "We understand that if we accept a society that does not help those who are vulnerable and weak, then it will not help us when we are vulnerable and weak," he said.

Mr Cook, who is the cleverest politician in his party, and just possibly the smartest in all Westminster, was, however, imprudent. He let our imaginations soar. His speech invited us to question the rate of income support under a Labour government. Very well then, we ask, how much?

Labour does not provide the answer, but I will. It will be the same as it would be under a Conservative government. New Labour is either deceiving everyone or it has dropped Old Labour's idea of redistributing wealth and income. I do not think Mr Blair is engaged in a huge campaign of deception. He is therefore less likely to be influenced by the poverty lobby than any previous Labour prime minister.

The most potent pressure group on behalf of the poor is the Child Poverty Action Group. Its latest edition of *Poverty: the facts*, out this week, is grist for those of us who cannot shake off the impression that since 1979 the rich have become much richer, which is self-evident,

while the poor have become poorer, which is in the process of being explained away. The very proposition is rejected by the government. Peter Lilley acknowledges that there are people on low incomes, but asserts that under the Conservatives benefits have increased in real terms.

These are tangled thickets, even for a successful secretary for social security. The CPAG

I do not think Mr Blair is engaged in a huge campaign of deception

observes that many more people live on or below the income support level: 14 per cent of the population in 1979 rising to 24 per cent in 1992. The figure would be higher still if Mr Cook's implied wish to see welfare payments increased came true. Another broad brush stroke depicts people on incomes less than half the average, housing costs excluded. This rose from 9 per cent of the population when the Tories came to power to a quarter now.

Such arithmetic does not move Mr Lilley. He points out

that expenditure statistics show the bottom fifth of the population having access to more refrigerators, telephones, cars, washing machines and the like than the same segment did 17 years ago. Anyhow, greater equality is not a current Conservative objective. The CPAG and one-nation Tory proposition that poverty is relative is dismissed.

The challenge is to the concept of "the poor" as a generic term. This argument is pursued on several fronts. People are broke at different times of their lives: when students, when unemployed, in old age. Families scrape along by running down savings. The self-employed may fail to report their income to the inland revenue.

Steven Webb of the Institute of Fiscal Studies has suggested that a half of those in the bottom decile of income in 1991-92 were out of it within two years. There is no single explanation: divorce, marriage, the arrival of children, children leaving home, and other changes of circumstance affect an individual's living standards.

Labour could respond in one of two ways. It might say that it seeks greater actual equality, a narrowing of the gap between those on top incomes and those at the bottom. To do that it must increase taxation, particularly of higher in-

comes, and spend more on benefits and subsidies. New Labour will not allow itself to think such thoughts.

The remaining option is to accept the analyses that break up the broad statistics. Instead of making speeches about helping the poor, look to specified groups. Promise further increases to the very old on state pensions. Level off benefits for all single parents and increase payments to never-married mothers under 25. Give them child-care vouchers and encourage them to seek work when the toddler reaches nursery-school age.

Those are national policies. Hard-core poverty is, however, best tackled at the local level, in designated parts of city centres. Here, money alone may not be the answer. Social workers might be deployed to assist broken families whose remaining members are either unemployed or in long-term unemployment. Teachers, the police, town planners, local businesses all need to be involved. Parish-level knowledge is essential. Local regeneration schemes may work, sort of, some of the time.

There is no other solution on offer. If Mr Cook and New Labour want to help the vulnerable and weak, they must strengthen local social services, even to the extent of throwing a few coins and the odd note into the hat.

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PERSPECTIVES

The Nature of Things

Fungus growth in spotlight

Clive Cookson looks at how mycology has moved from amateur fungal forays to a serious science

A new branch of biology was born officially 100 years ago in a Yorkshire pub. The inaugural meeting of the British Mycological Society in the Lonsborough Arms, Selby, marked the point at which the study of fungi moved into the sphere of professional science. Until then it had been dominated by amateurs who organised fungal forays into the woods and fields, collecting rare mushrooms and toadstools.

Today about 1,000 professional mycologists work in Britain - mainly in the health, medical and agricultural industries and in academic research - and their society is hoping to use the centenary to raise the profile of the field. There are estimated to be at least 1.5m species of fungi in the world, although only 70,000 are known and recorded, says Tony Whalley, a mycology professor at Liverpool John Moores University. "They represent one of the most important but most neglected living resources."

Fungi play a Jekyll and Hyde role in human health. They are responsible for a large and increasing - but still little recognised - amount of illness. Doctors are just beginning to think of fungal diseases as hidden killers, and the fast-growing market for antifungal drugs is worth about £3bn a year worldwide. At the same time, fungi have been the source of many life-saving medicines, especially antibiotics, and researchers expect them to provide many more in the future.

Medical research was far from the minds of the Victorian pioneers of mycology. The British Mycological Society traces its origins to the

Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club based at the Hereford Museum, whose curator Henry Graves Bull organised the first "foray among the funguses" in October 1867. The fungus festival soon became an annual event, attracting large numbers of botanists from Britain and abroad to "ransack the woods" of Herefordshire for interesting species, as a contemporary account put it. Edible proceeds were consumed in the Great Assembly Room of the Green Dragon Hotel.

In the 1890s the focus of mycology shifted to the more austere setting of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, which set up a mycological committee in 1892. Its annual

meetings were designed to replace the Hereford foray and "by avoiding the weak points of its predecessor, which were mainly confined to excess hospitality, prove at least equally attractive and instructive to mycologists". They lived up to expectations and led to the founding of the national society in 1896.

Although the society is dominated by professionals 100 years later, it retains a few hundred enthusiastic amateur members. Some of them turned out for a centenary foray held in Herefordshire earlier this month - in the inhospitable conditions of a cold, dry spring rather than the warmth and

damp of autumn, the traditional fungus hunting season. (An autumn foray will take place in Yorkshire.)

"The cold weather was disastrous from the normal point of view of collecting lots of large fungi," says Roy Watling of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. "But the conditions made us look harder for things we would not normally find, such as fungi growing on other fungi."

When the haul from Herefordshire has been analysed fully, it is likely to yield several new species. In some habitats, such as tropical forests, a single handful of soil will contain hundreds of different

fungi. Indeed, mycologists believe that the world of fungi contains more undiscovered species than any other group of organisms, including insects.

A hundred years ago, biologists considered fungi to be part of the plant kingdom but today they are recognised as a taxonomic kingdom in their own right: mycetes. Fungi show a remarkable diversity of form, from the microscopic germ-like cells that cause plant and animal diseases to huge mushrooms and toadstools. They also thrive in a wide range of habitats.

For example, Steven Moss of Portsmouth University specialises in studying fungi in the seas and

oceans. "Thirty years ago a textbook said there were no marine fungi," he says, "now we know of 600 species."

In spite of the enormous diversity, the vast majority of fungi share one characteristic - a filamentous feeding system known as mycelium. If all the mycelium threads in a handful of English garden soil were laid out end to end, they would measure hundreds of metres in length.

These threads can spread over enormous distances. The largest and oldest - individual specimens discovered so far is a honey fungus in Michigan, whose mycelium extends over an area as large as 20 football pitches and weighs more than 100 tonnes. "It is over 1,500 years old," says Watling.

Telling the age of such an ancient fungus is not as easy as counting the rings in a tree. Sophisticated genetic tests are required. Mycologists speculate that further research could easily uncover a fungus many thousands of years old.



Paul Gadsby: expansion of the business relies on it adjusting to new market conditions - especially foreign competition

Minding Your Own Business

Making baskets for all seasons

Clive Fewins visits a family which is looking forward more than most to the picnic time of year

Paul Gadsby will not forget the night of January 29 1995 in a hurry. Soon after midnight, he heard from the National Rivers Authority that there was going to be a flood. Three hours later, his business was under a foot of water.

Stock worth £100,000 was lost. Although all his products are made of willow, which thrives under wet conditions, several thousand baskets and hampers became stained and mouldy and had to be written off as an insurance loss.

By an odd twist, the waters that had given rise to the world-famous oyster beds of the Somerset Levels had brought six weeks of havoc to a business that is based on willow products.

The long term loss was not too great. The insurance claim was settled in full and the effect on the company's balance sheet was relatively minor. Turnover dropped from £1m the year before to £914,000, and gross profits were down £37,000 to £323,000.

But the episode meant that Gadsby - who, as well as being managing director, is sole salesman for the 18-person business - lost a lot of valuable time during the weeks when he had to run the business from home and salvage the undamaged stock from his warehouse.

Reverses are not something to which Gadsby, 37, had been used. He and wife Vivienne, his co-director, have seen sales increase by 10 to 15 per cent annually in the five years since he took over from his father, Stanley.

The business was started in 1864 in Stratford, east London, using willow supplied largely from Somerset. To escape the second world war London blitz, Gadsby's grandfather, William, moved the business to Somerset in 1941. It was intended to be temporary, but the family enjoyed country life so much that it stayed.

Business flourished, based largely on military contracts and Ministry of Supply work that lasted until the mid-

1980s. By developing new markets gradually, the Gadsbys overcame several setbacks. These included the closure of many basket work departments in blind schools that they had supplied, and the loss of passing trade when the road where they are based, a former holiday route, was superseded by the M5.

By the time Stanley retired in 1981, turnover was £535,000, with gross profits of 32 per cent. But Paul Gadsby had long realised that expansion was likely to be curtailed unless they could adjust, yet again, to new market conditions - in particular, foreign competition.

As he explains: "Large retailers, with the power to buy products like ours in quantity, were going direct to the importers. We were facing a future of just supplying individual customers and small retailers."

Gadsby was confident that a market would remain for high quality British baskets and hampers, made from the company's own willows and woven by

its own staff. But the key to making profits lay in importing, and successful trading in bulk orders.

Today, about 80 per cent of the 100,000 willow hampers that the company supplies each year are imported. Most come from Poland, Romania and Madeira. They go to businesses as varied as motor companies (for their accessory brochures), leading stores such as Harrods, and food-makers.

On the other hand, about 80 per cent of the picnic baskets - both plain and with fully-fitted interiors - are produced by Gadsby's own staff. Even so, he admits: "While it is the quality fitted picnic baskets we may be known for, it is the bulk orders of imported hampers that generate most of the profits."

One difficulty with the English baskets is that the company has only eight weavers capable of making them. "We can produce only a certain number in a week," he says. "So, if a big order comes in out of the blue, we can usually only satisfy it by using

imported baskets."

He feels that these, while just over half the price of British baskets, are more than half as good in quality and represent a good buy for most customers. But he adds: "There will always be a demand for the British ones because they are usually made from better quality willow and we insist on a very high standard of finish."

Gadsby says the company's future lies in expanding its range of products - it has a small but growing plant which produces artists' charcoal from willow - and in exporting. He adds: "While UK sales have climbed well in recent years, exports have dropped."

"I'd be extremely happy if we could export large quantities of completely fitted premium picnic baskets with best home-produced tableware inside. After all, traditional picnic baskets have a particular British image."

W. Gadsby and Son Ltd, Burrowbridge Basket Works, Burrowbridge, near Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 0SG. Tel: 01239-698553

Letter from Tokyo

Two English gentlewomen and a cause

William Dawkins reports on belated apologies for Japan's lepers

Nothing more clearly symbolises Japan's tradition of concealing the unsightly than its attitude to lepers.

More than 40 years after most industrialised countries ended mandatory quarantine for lepers following the discovery of a treatment for the disease, Japan's 5,600 lepers are still shut up in remote colonies, some with excruciatingly euphemistic names such as Garden of Fulfillment.

That situation is about to change. The Japanese government has just approved a bill to scrap the leprosy prevention law - under which lepers are obliged to live in colonies - and the new health minister, Naoto Kan, has issued a fulsome apology to the sufferers. Within the next couple of months, the bill is likely to pass parliament.

All this brings to a conclusion a campaign started in the late 19th century by a largely forgotten and yet extraordinary English missionary, Hannah Riddell.

Her life is recounted in an entertaining biography by Julia Boyd, wife of Sir John Boyd, a recent British ambassador to Japan.

A forceful lady, who spent much of her life trying to rise above her origins in a barracks in Barnet, Hertfordshire, Hannah Riddell set out for Japan in 1880 to make a career, more than - or so her colleagues suspected - to save souls. She soon spotted an opportunity in the treatment of lepers, one area where Japan was falling behind in its high speed Meiji era transformation from feudal to modern industrialised society.

In the southern rural town of Kumamoto, where Hannah Riddell was based, she was saddened to see that lepers were confined to the grounds of a Buddhist temple.

After spectacular battles with the local missionary hierarchy, the strong-willed Riddell stamped through the social barriers to forge friendships at the highest levels. With the help of these distinguished contacts, she established one of the first modern leper colonies in Japan, in which inmates were treated

with humanity and respect. Hannah Riddell was in her element running her Kaishun Hospital for lepers in Kumamoto, perhaps winning prestige and recognition that would have been denied in Britain.

By Lady Boyd's account, she governed with the affectionate firmness of a British public school matron. Known as mother by her fearful and yet adoring patients, Riddell was often seen being carried around Kumamoto in a litter, followed by her pack of small pedigree dogs.

Sadly, Kaishun was destroyed by the military authorities - who decided it was a training centre for spies - just after the outbreak of the second world war. But she is

Hannah Riddell set out for Japan to make a career rather than to save souls

still remembered warmly by the locals who recently formed a memorial society to her and her niece, Ada Wright carried on the good work after Riddell's death in 1923.

This is recognition of just how important were the two Englishwomen in destroying some prejudice. Without them, the ending of mandatory quarantine might have come about even more slowly than was the case.

However, this acceptance comes too late for the few surviving inmates of Kaishun and other Japanese leprosy sufferers. Few old peoples' homes will accept them in the mistaken belief that leprosy is highly contagious.

So they will stay where they are, drawing a very little comfort, perhaps, from the health minister's apologies and memories of old friends like the ladies of Kaishun Hospital.

"Hannah Riddell. An Englishwoman in Japan. By Julia Boyd. Published by Charles E. Tuttle Publishing Company. 215 pages. ¥1,590.

Continued from Page 1

as press competition intensifies.

What, then, are the rules which European monarchies have evolved in the democratic, television age for ensuring a succession?

The first is to keep out of politics. This is as much a matter of individual approach as of obeying written constitutions. Here, the three "dignified functions" of the monarch identified by the Victorian political writer Walter Bagehot are often quoted: the right to be consulted, the right to encourage and the right to warn.

As far as the British crown is concerned, Bagehot understated the position, according to the political historian Peter Hennessy. Britain's Queen probably has more power than Bagehot said. But, in an effectively two-party system, she has rarely needed to use it.

On the Continent, where elections are by proportional

representation and coalitions are the rule, the monarch has a greater influence in government making - except, perhaps, in Sweden since a 1974 reform - than the fine print implies. Thus, King Juan Carlos has discreetly made his mark on the current political negotiations in Spain. The late King Baudouin was active in maintaining a precarious balance in Belgium and Queen Juliana of the Netherlands once presided over 209 days without a government in 1973-74. Her daughter Beatrix likes to exercise powers to the limit.

The second rule is to maintain family discipline. Beatrix holds regular family gatherings to swap notes. "She doesn't want to leave anything to chance," said Harry van Wijnen, a former political correspondent of the daily *Hollandse Nieuws*. Others wonder if the Dutch royal house, for all Beatrix's famed managerial expertise ("the general manager of the kingdom", as her press secretary called her), would have

survived all the troubles besetting the House of Windsor.

The third rule is to maintain a modest style of life, even if, like Beatrix, you are one of the richest women in Europe. (This Queen does not, however, ride a bicycle.) Conspicuous consumption, especially at the taxpayers' expense, is a hostage to fortune. The Swedish MF Samuelson's only objection to the institution is the expense. "Maybe we could privatise them a bit more," he joked, "or get a commercial sponsor."

Most of the continental families do not own the palaces in which they live and work. In general, taxpayers support only the incumbent, the retiree and the heir. The rest of the family are expected to get a proper job.

Royal children on the Continent are sent to normal schools and to universities abroad where they are more likely to enjoy anonymity. If they sail yachts, fly aircraft, ride motorbikes and drive fast cars that is tolerated provided they satisfy the public and

press that underneath they are "serious".

The next rule is to strike a balance: to be above the crowd but not aloof from it, as one head of the royal household put it. This may be more difficult in Britain, which is seen as a class-ridden society in which the queen is the apex of the social pyramid. "With respect, the British Queen seems very complacent," said the Dutch commentator van Wijnen. "There is no complacency here."

According to this precept, monarchs should be different but not too different, ordinary but not too ordinary. "You cannot ask them to spend their lives in the pub and not get drunk," said a Spanish aristocrat. "It is a matter of bending with the wind, not allowing yourself to be broken," according to Søren Haslund-Christensen, Lord Chamberlain at the Danish palace.

As for talking to the press, the rule is: Don't. "It's a no-win situation if you start," said a palace adviser.

Another said: "Television is the wrong way for the king to reach the public. If it is too serious, it becomes political. If it is light, it just looks frivolous." Apparently after this injunction, Juan Carlos, once the most approachable king in Europe, has stopped giving "audiences" to journalists.

If all else fails in the presidential family - the education, the military service, the marriage, the fines themselves - there is a final recourse: manipulate the succession.

The credit accumulated by an incumbent is not always enough to tide over a weak or unpromising heir. Royal families, like private businesses, will become public companies eventually if dynastic dynamism runs out. Belgium, for example, is a country used to succession crises. The last occurred when Baudouin died unexpectedly three years ago. Crown Prince Philippe, although old enough to take over, was considered unready and his uncle Albert accepted the throne. Philippe, now 36

and unmarried, is still regarded as unready. Belgians say they would prefer his sister Astrid, married with children to an Austrian archduke.

The gadabout crown prince of the Netherlands, Willem-Alexander, is said to be causing concern at the palace while his opposite number in Copenhagen, Prince Frederik, has admitted in a newspaper interview his struggle to develop enthusiasm for the job that awaits him.

In this lies possibly the greatest danger to the hereditary presidency - that the coming generations, ever more "normal" in their upbringing and attitude, will be unwilling to trade their own interests and lives for the public duties and public exposure that the job entails.

Press attention will be crucial here, according to Carl Erik Grønstad, deputy private secretary to the King of Norway until three years ago. "If the press make their lives unbearable, sooner or later they could destroy any per-

sonal relationship they try to form." Or as a high-born former diplomat explained: "If the monarchy comes to an end it will not be because it is chased out but because it throws in the towel."

European monarchs have dwindled to suit the times. Once high priests divinely anointed, they went on to enjoy a long period of absolute rule which extended even into the present century. Since the second world war - which reconfirmed the status of most (though not the unhappy Leopold III of Belgium) - they have shrunk again to become conscientious, privileged persons who enjoy moral authority and popular affection.

They are symbols of nationhood in young countries such as Norway, symbols of unity in tribally divided realms like Belgium, Spain and Britain. They have become charity workers, ambassadors and lobbyists for export contracts. In future, according to Grønstad, they will have to become "cultural" leaders, embodying the

spiritual and moral values which the churches can no longer disseminate.

There are signs that the British royal house, once so dismissive of its "middle-class" cousins on the European mainland, is taking some of the lessons to heart. The Queen's decision to start paying income tax, to fund the repairs to Windsor Castle after the fire, to travel sometimes in an ordinary railway carriage, to give up sole use of the royal yacht, to stop subsidising her wayward daughter-in-law, are all straws in the wind.

Continental experience shows that family disasters may be inevitable but need not be fatal. Rehabilitation is always possible. But if the family firm is to survive, each new boss has to earn again respect for the institution.

For the present, say the politicians of Europe, it is unthinkable to challenge the monarchy. To remove it is more trouble than it is worth. But the moment the royal family becomes more trouble than it is worth, that will be the end.

NEXT WEEK: Spain - the man who remade the monarchy.

PERSPECTIVES

The tiger – vanishing with barely a whimper

A wonderful creature is about to become extinct. Michael Woods reports

I have just seen a wild tiger. It is probably the only one I will ever see because, unless the world acts soon, all but an elusive handful of these cats will have disappeared.

This beautiful animal, the wonderful creature of nursery, fiction and poetry, the awe-inspiring linchpin of myth, legend and religion, is about to become extinct. But how is it that the largest of the big cats has reached this state and what, if anything, can be done to ensure its recovery?

Half a century ago there were between 25,000 and 30,000 tigers in Asia. According to *Killed for a Cure*, a report on the world-wide trade in tiger parts published in 1994 by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) this number has fallen to between 5,000 and 7,400.

The total number of tiger subspecies has been reduced from eight to five and these are scattered around 14 Asian countries, including the two most densely populated countries in the world, China and India. Malaysia has about 600 as does Indonesia, Bangladesh has 300, Vietnam and Russia 200 each and the other countries have smaller numbers still. Only India has a substantial number with more than 60 per cent of the world population.

Not surprisingly this is where tiger conservation has tended to be concentrated. It was here that Project Tiger was launched in 1973 when it seemed that the animal was spiralling into extinction at a time when tiger hunting and the export of skins was still legal.

Indira Gandhi, India's former prime minister, embraced the cause – giving it political will, and backing it with several million dollars. The tiger was protected and Project Tiger reserves were established. It was a success and, for a while, it appeared to have worked. But, as Peter Jackson, chairman of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, said, the real crisis emerged in 1992. "Tigers which I knew well in Ranthambhore National Park, simply disappeared until half the known tigers had gone."

Ranthambhore is a beautiful park of open plains and dense woodland in a complex of rolling hills and deep gorges. Here there are herds of spotted and sambar deer living alongside antelope and wild boar while peacocks strut and cry among the trees and along the lake shores.

Even with only half its tigers, 80 per cent of those taking game drives still see the striped cats which are remarkably relaxed here and do not skulk in the undergrowth as they do elsewhere. Sadly I was not one of the lucky ones. I did not see a single tiger and, in spite of the occasional pug mark pressed into the dust, it almost felt as if every one had now disappeared in the tiger's new crisis – to feed the demand for traditional Chinese medicine.

Almost every part of the tiger is traditionally used by the people of China, Japan and Korea and to some extent other Asian countries, to cure a variety of ailments. The demand for tiger bone appears to be

the main force which drives up the price in the commercial market. Last year, in India alone, parts from 50 tigers were discovered. According to Jackson the number can be multiplied by a factor of five or six to reach the true figure.

In Burma, it is still not illegal to kill tigers. Burma, Laos (Lao PDR) and Cambodia are not signatories to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. But even some countries which are, only pay lip service to its requirements. Japan, a major tiger part consumer, has no legislation to prevent domestic sales. Customs officials either refuse to admit that a trade in tiger parts exists or lack resources to do more.

In 1994 an undercover operation disclosed that in Chinese communities in London, Manchester and Birmingham, 50 per cent of traditional pharmacists had tiger part products in stock. There have been convictions in Britain as a result.

As the countries of South East Asia experience booming economies, so traditional Chinese medicine becomes more affordable to their peoples' and, far from turning

away from such traditions, with increasing economic strength comes a rejection of western influence in favour of a return to traditional values. The market is vast and trying to influence such deeply held beliefs seems all but impossible. However, there are glimmers of light. At the end of last year, Judy Mills, co-author with Peter Jackson of *Killed for a Cure*, helped to organise an international symposium in Hong Kong which brought together wildlife conservationists and specialists in traditional Chinese medicine from throughout the region to discuss the sustainable use of wildlife. She sees persuasion rather than censure as the way forward.

In March, at a meeting in Hanoi, tiger specialists from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, where WWF-International claims that tigers are disappearing at the rate of one a week, drafted plans for action to save their tigers by finding out more about them and by trying to suppress international trade. Against enormous local opposition a group is trying to do much the same thing in Korea where the Siberian sub-species of tiger is at risk and where the size of its population is small but unknown.

A much larger number of Siberian tigers still hangs on across the border in the Russian Far East. WWF suggests that the rate of poaching here has slowed and it is

funding a big effort to census the animals. The signs are not good, however, in this remote Russian area.

To add to the tiger's problems, large areas of forest are disappearing in Malaysia while in Thailand tiger habitat is becoming increasingly fragmented by roads, dams and human settlements. In India, where elections are to take place shortly, there are national pressures on existing tiger reserves from oil companies as well as demands from local communities for grazing and fuel wood.

Ranthambhore is a perfect example of the agricultural pressures. It stands as an island of wilderness in an area of impoverishment. One evening, as we reached the gates, we found a group of people huddled around a fire made of wood confiscated from local people. "It will make no difference," said my guide, "they will be back tomorrow cutting more." Valmik Thapar's Ranthambhore Foundation has been working since 1987 to improve the situation for those living around its boundaries. Its schemes include the provision of buffaloes to reduce the number of dairy cows villagers need to keep, tree planting schemes and primary health care programmes.

Corbett National Park, named after the famous hunter of man-eaters, is much more fortunate than Ranthambhore for it has a buffer of forest around it which acts as a shock absorber. I stayed in the Claridges Corbett Highway, a new and comfortable safari camp on the edge of the park just a few minutes by Jeep from the gate. But it was on an evening when I slept in a bungalow in the core area of the park that I saw my tiger.

It was not a pleasant experience. Mounted on elephants we swayed quietly through the forest to where a male tiger had killed a sambar a few days before. It was still there and as we approached, growled from deep cover. The elephants milled round it so that everyone could see the animal and then, as it began to get dark, one without pressed his elephant closer. The tiger charged, leaping out. Fortunately it was time to leave.

This offensive spectacle was not how I wanted to see a tiger not the way in which Project Tiger reserve should be treating its most precious charges.

Fortunately not all tiger watching is so grisly and, especially at Ranthambhore where the animals are so relaxed, it can be a highly enjoyable experience.

Eco-tourism is one way in which money can be channelled to where it is required. At present park fees are laughably low and little opportunity is taken to inform the western visitor of the plight of the tiger. An American I talked to knew that tigers were endangered but had no idea why. She was not typical of the rest of the park visitors at Ranthambhore. Yet every foreign visitor could be an ambassador for the tiger on their return home.

Moreover, organisations such as Care for the Wild have found that the tiger is a huge generator of donations. And those who give not

only provide money to support the Ranthambhore Foundation but also to buy vehicles and equipment to combat poachers on the ground.

There was an overwhelming feeling of helplessness among those associated with park staff who are ill-equipped and often poorly motivated to search out and confront well-armed poachers. Project Tiger, which once gave powerful protection to these park areas, is now floundering according to WWF.

There are still tigers to be seen in the many tiger reserves, especially in India, but, as Peter Jackson admits, the long term future is bleak. Even if the current situation can be turned round, the demand for tiger parts reduced and the poachers stopped, tigers now live in isolated populations. Most of these island reserves, cut off from one another by people, are too small. Each needs to support a minimum of 100 tigers in order for the cats to be genetically sustainable. Only the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve on the border of India and Bangladesh has a sufficiently large population. It seems that the tiger will not make a grand exit, as might be such a regal cat. Instead, unless profound changes take place in the near future, its populations will slowly dribble away until it is no longer seen in the wild and it will have gone without even a whimper.

Michael Woods' visit was arranged through "A Journey Through India", the tour operation arm of Groves Travel, using British Airways scheduled flights. Address: 34 Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3PF. Tel: 0171-487 5687. He stayed at The Claridges Corbett Highway and at the Savoy Madhupur Lodge, Ranthambhore.

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Africa's 'dreadful old fogie'

J.D.F. Jones considers a Victorian hero



"Zambezi, or two channel rapid, above the Kalambo, Zambezi River" by Thomas Baines, 1859

There can be no denying that David Livingstone, Scotland's famous missionary, was a disaster at the job. Over many years he made just one convert, who lapsed after six months. Livingstone went on to become a famous explorer: he was not always good at that either – he got the source of the Nile wrong, and he did not realise that the Zambesi was non-navigable (he had been asked to bypass the Cabora Bassa gorge).

He was a poor leader of men, and his marriage to the wretched Mary Moffat, whom he met in her father's mission on the edge of the Kalahari – you can still see the stump of the almond tree under which he proposed – is hardly an endorsement of his qualities as a family man. She died a lonely alcoholic.

But he was a Victorian hero, and, surely, deservedly so, which is the point which emerges triumphantly from an excellent exhibition at London's National Portrait Gallery. More than that, and unlike other African missionaries (whose role in the continent has been much debated), he became a mythic hero for the latter half of the Victorian age. In spite of his recent biographers, that reputation remains secure.

He was a classic Samuel Smiles example of early-Victorian self-help, emerging from the obscurity of a Lanarkshire cotton mill. After the barren years as a missionary, he determined to open up the African continent – which, it is hard to remember today, was as mysterious as the moon is to us – to "Commerce, Christianity and Civilisation", in no particular order.

He made these brave and lengthy expeditions for Christ, yes, but also to expose Africa

to trade, and (preferably Scottish) colonists. That plan would lead to his encounter with, and detestation of, the slave trade, which is where he becomes immortal.

"It is not all pleasure, this exploration," he wrote in his journal a fortnight before his death in a remote African village in 1873. This must rate as the century's greatest understatement. The story of these years in the bush – fully documented in this exhibition – beggars belief when we think of his endurance and, also, the support he continued to com-

mand from his African staff. Their famous exploit in carrying his body for nine months to the ocean, and accompanying it to Westminster Abbey, is proof of that loyalty.

No wonder his life story became mythic for the Victorians, after his discovery by Henry Morton Stanley in 1871. "Dr Livingstone, I presume" must be the century's most famous sound-bite. (Note, as does an essay by John Mackenzie in the catalogue to this show, that hero-figures of many civilisations archetypically set off on a long and dan-

gerous journey. Mackenzie does not add that Livingstone managed to "disappear" for the mythic period of seven years.)

Livingstone's memory was then enshrined as a saintly anti-slaver rather than as the exhausted and fallible explorer. Little wonder then that the reputation survived and flourished while Stanley, in contrast, retreated into the horrors of the Congo's imperial exploitation.

The result was, according to another catalogue essay by Felix Driver, that Livingstone's life promoted a sense of a

moral mission for the future British colonial effort in Africa. That is a rather important achievement if you think, as I do, that Britain's record had its positive aspects.

So there is no harm in remembering that Livingstone may also have been a hypocrite, and something less than a hero. In the later years he depended on the Arab slave dealers of whose trade he was the world's leading enemy. He was a remarkable man, and honest with it: to quote him near the end, "I am very old and shaky – my cheeks fall – a smile that is of a hippopotamus – a dreadful old fogie."

This exhibition, which moves to Edinburgh in the summer, has many delights. There is a chunk of the *mpundu* tree under which his heart was buried; there is a cast of his broken arm, the legacy of his mauling by a lion; there are some lovely naive watercolours by Sir Samuel Baker, including his picture of the famous occasion when Baker and his horse were pursued by an elephant and the elephant was *going*.

And I enjoyed the long list drawn up by explorer James Grant of the "African Kit" he must remember to pack, which, in addition to shirts, bridles, ammunition, etc, includes "One Housewife, large". I believe that that is a word for a sewing kit.

David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa is at the National Portrait Gallery until July 7 and then the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, July 27 to October 10. The catalogue has the same title. Supported by The John Ellerman Foundation, Baillie Gifford and Co. the Mrs Harryhausen Trust, Harpers & Queen.

Return of the wolf

Terry McCarthy on plans to revitalise a species

Fourteen wolves were released into Yellowstone Park in the north-west US last spring – the first wolves the park had seen since the last pair were exterminated in 1926. It was a momentous event.

Once vilified as bloodthirsty killers, and driven to the verge of extinction in the US, wolves, in a remarkable turnaround, had come to be seen by many as victims deserving of rehabilitation. Or, as Hank Fischer, one of the people most involved in the bitter fight to reintroduce the wolves, put it: "Wolves are cool."

Today, visitors tour Yellowstone in the hope of catching a glimpse of the loping grey wolves – and their offspring. According to Marsha Karle, of the park service, there have been thousands of reported sightings in the last year.

This was a surprise, since wolves have learnt – the hard way – to keep their distance from humans. Some visitors have even heard the wolves' spine-tingling and haunting howl.

The battle by conservationists to reintroduce the wolf had lasted for 20 years, and was almost as fierce as the attempt to wipe out the creature earlier this century.

Farmers around Yellowstone fought the reintroduction campaign all the way. The legal battle is not over and there is still a possibility that the wolves will have to be recaptured and given to zoos, or even shot. But, with eco-friendly public sentiment continuing to grow in favour of the wolves, and more to be

introduced, the animals' future in America's largest national park is the brightest it has been in 100 years.

In the last century, wolves roamed across the North American continent, from Alaska down to northern Mexico. But with the westward expansion, man soon came to be the wolf's main enemy, first hunting him for his pelt, and then killing him as a potential predator of livestock.

In farming states, the authorities offered bounties for dead wolves. In 1914 the US Congress appropriated funds for the elimination of wolves and, in little more than a decade, they had almost disappeared from 48 states.

Little changed for the wolf until 1973, when the Endangered Species Act was passed and the wolf was listed. Biologists and conservationists began a campaign to have wolves reintroduced into Yellowstone, an area of 2.2m acres surrounded by a further 6m acres of wilderness. Yellowstone and its environs had plentiful elk and deer for the wolves to prey on, and little livestock farming, they argued.

But the farmers of Wyoming, where Yellowstone is situated, and the neighbouring state of Montana were implacable. Wolves can travel long distances in search of prey, and could reach ranches around the park.

Farmers resented the fact that under conservation laws they could not shoot wolves on their land unless they caught them in the act of killing livestock – highly unlikely given that ranches in the west are

often thousands of acres and wolves often kill at night.

Political lobbying by both sides continued. Then, in 1993, a plan was finally drawn for reintroducing captured Canadian wolves to Yellowstone, and Congress passed the funds – \$400,000 (£261,000) a year. The wolf was on its way back.

But farmers have not given up. "The battle is not yet over – it has only begun," said Jake Cummings of the Montana Farm Bureau Federation. He claims that with 50,000 wolves in Canada and another 10,000 in Alaska, the wolf is not an endangered species, and that the government is misusing public funds in paying for the reintroduction. Court cases are still pending.

Of the original 14 wolves in Yellowstone, four have been killed – either by cars on the road or by ranchers finding them on their land outside the park. Nine pups were born shortly after their release into the park. Biologists had predicted a 50 per cent mortality rate.

Another 17 are being introduced this month from Canada. Fears that the wolves would head straight back to Canada have also proved unfounded. The wolves live in three separate packs and have yet to interfere with livestock.

"It is surprising how well it has gone," said Hank Fischer, who represents the Defenders of Wildlife conservation group in the region. "There is still some animosity [among farmers], but once they realise the wolves don't cause too many problems, I suspect they won't focus on it so much."

HOW TO SPEND IT



The Traditional Garden Supply Company goes in for no grand designs, no recherché statuary or raffine pots - what it offers is good, sturdy old-fashioned useful items for those who live even a modicum of an outdoor life. Its Shaker-style boot bench has become almost a classic of the country house back hall but now it has expanded to offer larger storage of every kind, from cedar tool boxes to

garden lockers to house the tractor, spades and watering cans. Its cypress wood doormat is beautiful as well as useful and costs £34.99, while its cream or bottle green parasols are perfect for the gentle colours of English gardens.

It offers simple, sturdy wooden benches at prices ranging from £299 to £479.99. For a copy of the brochure telephone 01453-273366.



For topiaria, whether closet or "outed", The Wadhams Trading Company has a startling collection of hand-crafted wire forms, all welded from galvanised steel wire to be used for this age-old form of gardening.

The company's small topiary collection was such a success last year that it has hugely expanded the selection. Besides the classic and probably ultimately more appealing shapes such as Southrop Spheres - which would look terrific flanked either side of the manorial door - there are lots of whimsical shapes ranging from hearts to rabbits, ducks, dogs, cats, giraffes and even elephants.

If topiary is not quite your thing there are also some slim garden tools in lightweight solid cast aluminium, metal garden furniture and some lead coloured resin statuary and urns for those still hoping to lend a little grandeur to their acres.

Prices range from £12.95 for a tortoise topiary metal support to £220 for the large sheep and pig and £275 for the Southrop Spheres. The urn photographed here is £125.

For a brochure, write to The Wadhams Trading Company, Wadhams House, Southrop, Nr. Lechlade, Glos GL7 8PB. Tel: 01267-850498.

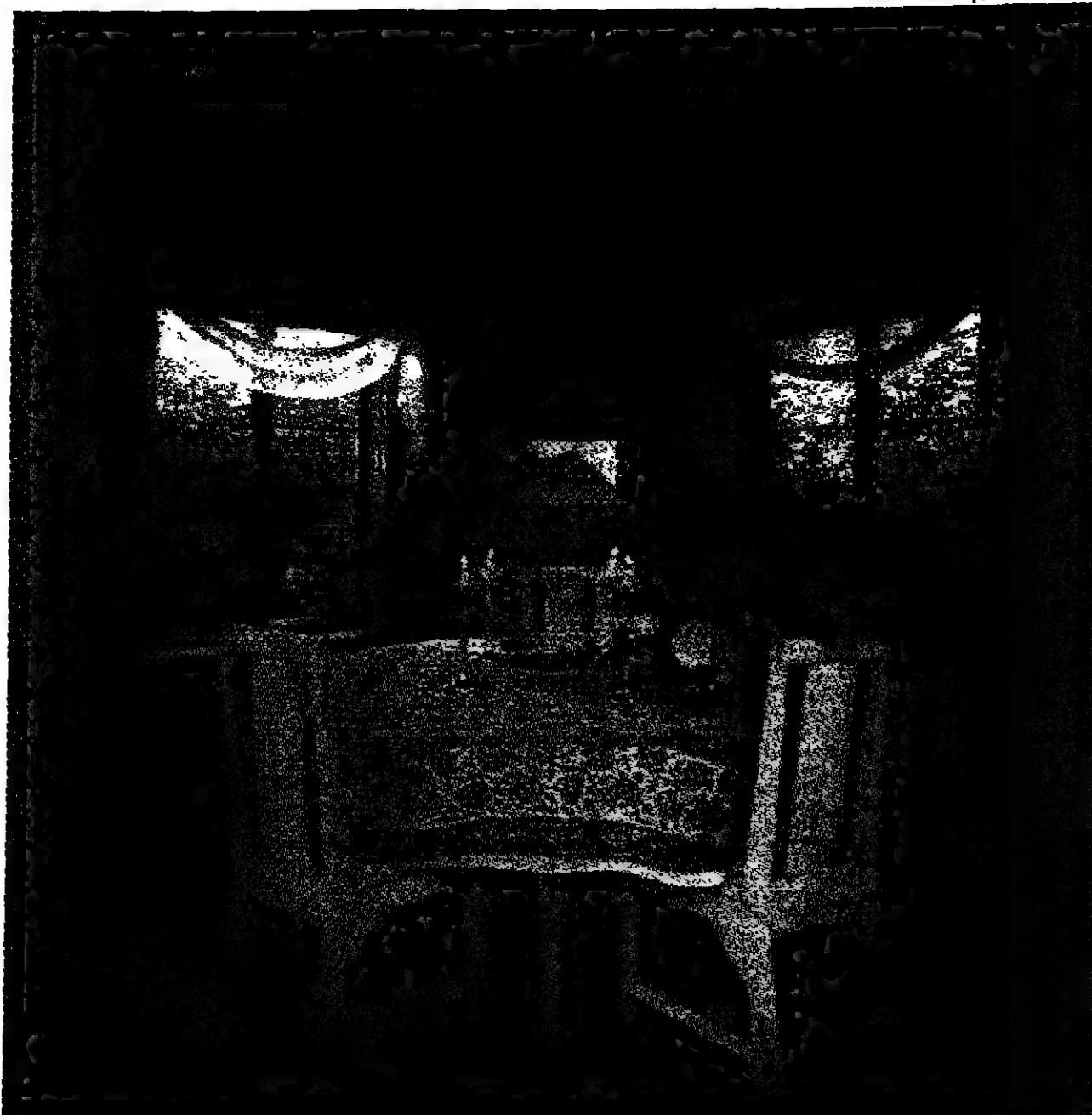
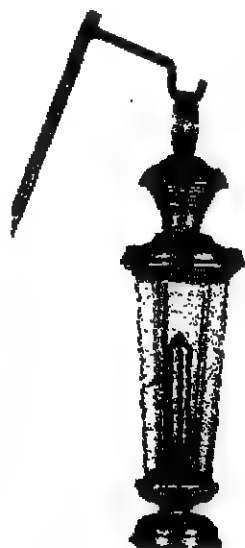
For summer dining this Indian garden lantern (right) is hard to beat.

It hangs from a spiked pole and has a brass oil candle tube. If you can afford a whole raft of them, detach them from their poles and then hang them with wire from any number of trees to illuminate a pool, patio or garden at night.

There is also a wall-bracket so they could be hung in a conservatory or on garden walls.

With the bracket, in unpolished brass, the lamp costs £38. With an iron pole, for fixing in a flower-bed or lawn, it costs £39.

All from the Stiffkey Lamp Shop, Stiffkey, Norfolk NR23 1AJ. Tel: 01263-830490.



For inspiration on the magic of summer houses, conservatories and pavilions, I recommend Diane Berger's beautifully produced book on *The Dining Room* (published by Abbeville Press, £21). Its last chapter is a wonderfully evocative photographic essay on the charms of eating in summer-

houses and out of doors. Here is a particularly enchanting summer scene, conjured up out of simple ingredients (painted wooden floors, a simple Indian cotton tablecloth, muslin at the windows and a little frieze of cupids above each window).



You would not expect highly sophisticated designs from Oxfam's new catalogue (Worldwide Inspirations for you and your home, 1996) but what you do expect (and find) are a few simple, inexpensive aids to summer living.

Photographed here are some unfussy, exceedingly useful conservatory (or outer-room) shelves. Painted a gentle and garden-friendly sage green, the unit is 185cm high and it costs £199.95.

Besides the shelves, there are good burnished iron candle-holders with a glass shade to protect the candle from the wind - a garden path lit with them for a summer party would look wonderful. Two spikes cost £55, a set of six cream church candles, £8.95. Anybody wanting a jute hammock will find one for £19.95. The catalogue is available from Oxfam Trading, Murdock Road, Bicester, Oxon OX6 7RP.

I garden (in the nineties), therefore I am

Furnishing your own patch of the outdoors has become big business, writes Lucia van der Post

The perils of furnishing or even adding accessories to the garden are no less arduous than those of furnishing the house. As if you needed telling, the garden is in serious danger of turning into a tyrannical taste zone, where every plant and every dibber tells your friends and neighbours a great deal more about you than you would like them to know.

The garden, after all, is to the nineties what the patio was to the fifties, the farmhouse family kitchen to the sixties, the bathroom to the seventies and the hand-crafted, rag-rolled kitchen to the eighties.

The garden has become more than a simple way of enhancing the soil around the homeric altar, it has become a source of self-expression, of self-enhancement, of playing out life's fantasies. I garden, therefore I am, seems to be the nineties mantra.

It is all, say those whose job it is to forecast social trends, tied up with cocooning, family values and eco-consciousness taking root. Its other great plus, according to sociologists, is that it offers tremendous opportunities for that other great nineties

fashion - the equal sharing of tasks between husband and wife (whoops sorry, partners). While womanly activity can focus around the plants, the weeding and the aesthetics, masculine attention can be directed towards the pergolas and garden walls, the rockeries and grand design.

All of which means that gardens and gardening are big business. An estimated £2.8bn is spent on gardens and their accoutrements today. And you do not have to have a full-scale garden to participate in this great new activity. There is plenty to tempt the tastes and purses of those whose sole horticultural endeavour is expended on indoor plants and pots of herbs. While for those with so much as a window-box or a tub, the wider horizons of expenditure and self-defining purchasing beckon.

Garden centres - the "bulbs r us" of the horticultural world - are one of the new growth industries and wandering round them has become a favourite leisure activity of the gardening classes. There are those, however, to whom the garden centre is anathema and who buy their plants only from rarefied and specialised nurseries. But for the more mundane things of

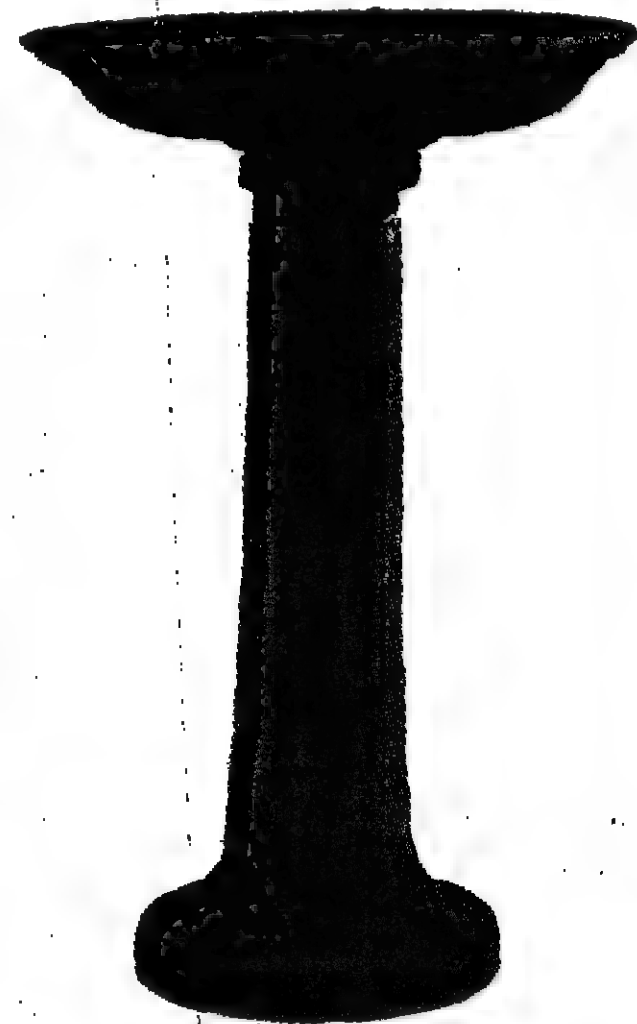
gardening life even they may, at some stage, resort to riffling through the mail order catalogues.

These days there is almost nothing you cannot buy by mail. From ornate statuary to authentic reproductions of Lutyens and Victoria wrought-iron wizardry, from terracotta pots from Tuscany to verdigris fountains, from latticed panels to wooden tools almost Shaker-like in their simplicity.

But for this week's page I have concentrated on the more mundane aspects of gardening life.

Here are companies which will supply you with things as useful as sturdy as conservatory shelves at accessible prices, with garden lights and hammocks, with bird-baths and garden chairs.

Fashions may come and fashions may go but these are the staples of garden life. Long after the chrysanthemum and the dahlia have been rehabilitated into the horticultural snob's frame of reference (with the rose - just possibly - relegated to the 'horticultural desert') these things will go on serving a useful, entirely unfashionable purpose.



McCorr Design by Mail gets better and better. For the summer of 1996 it has a whole range of suggestions for those wanting to eat out of doors, to furnish gardens, conservatories or potting sheds and all of it at excellent prices.

Baker's racks - once only available as genuine antiques rescued from old French farmhouses and bakeries - are now copied far and wide. McCorr offers a version in wrought-iron (£249.50) which measures 72in by 32in by 14in and would make a splendidly decorative shelving system in a conservatory or garden house.

It has a verdigris hurricane light for £9.95 (charming for eating by candlelight on a summer's night), an antique metal bench for £99.75 and some sturdy copies of old-fashioned traditional garden accessories.

Look out for the traditional



garden line kit (used for helping gardeners to sow seeds in straight lines) made from recycled pitch pine taken from Lancashire Mills (£8.99), and, shown above, a wooden dibber made from a single piece of turned wood (£3.99) and a nicely classical-looking terracotta bird-bath (£79.95).

For a catalogue telephone 01793-133499.



All Oxley's furniture is made from sand-founded aluminium and most of the designs are based on designs from the early 19th century and have timeless appeal.

Styles range from very ornate tables to the relatively plain and classical lines of a big selection of chairs, including this Constantian Armchair in midnight blue (£298).

Oxley's Furniture is at Lapstone Barn, Westington Hill, Chipping Campden, Glos GL56 6UR. Tel: 01386-840466.



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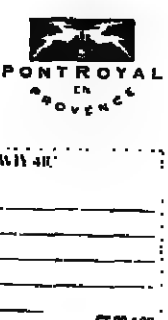
Centre piece is the Seve Ballesteros designed championship golf course. Adjoining it are the sympathetically designed villas, town houses and apartments. Priced from £500,000 to £50,000.

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FASHION

Couture dream makes a comeback

Belinda Morris tells how modern developments have made shantung, the luxury formal fabric, fun for daytime

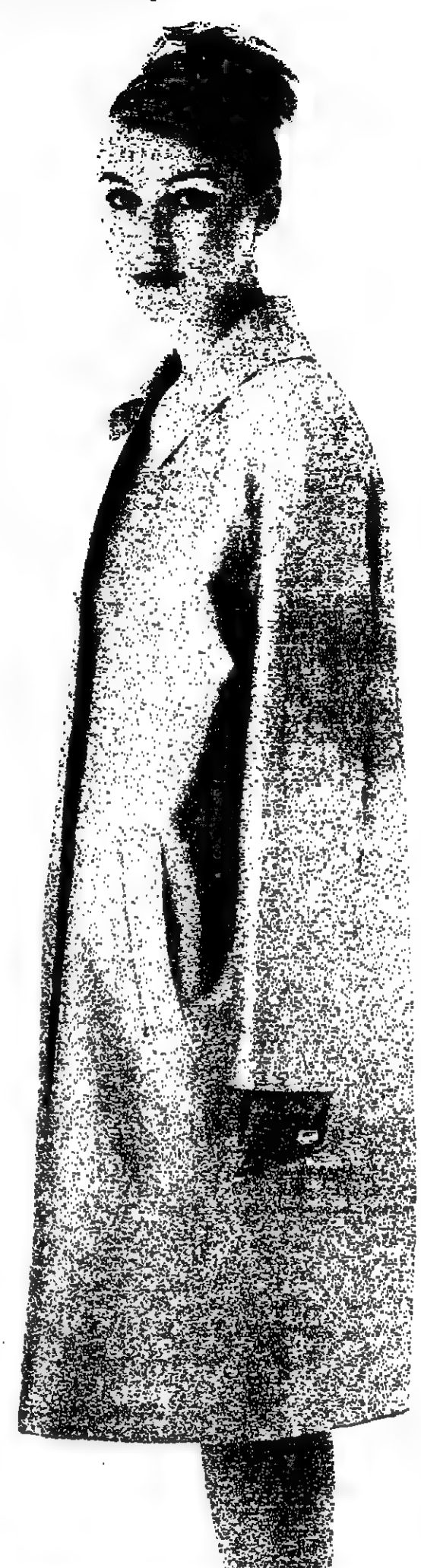


Left: Fitted shantung silk tangerine jacket with two-way zip, £425, and matching zipped A-line above-the-knee skirt, £175, by DKNY, 27 Old Bond Street, London W1 (tel 0171-489 8000). Crystal earrings, £170 and ring, £110, by Lalique, 162 New Bond Street, London W1 (tel 0171-489 0223)

Right: Line shantung silk single-breasted jacket, £240, and matching flat-fronted, slim trousers, £140, by Nicole Farhi, 130 New Bond Street, London W1 (tel 0171-489 8368), and branches and Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1. Silver and enamel earrings, £57, by Helena Rohrer from Jean Jarnas, 3 Newburgh Street, London W1 (tel 0171-437 0198), and Ally Capellino, 95 Wardour Street, London W1 (tel 0171-484 0789). Silver star pendant, £85, by Dower and Hall, 80 Southamp Place, London SW5 (tel 0171-589 2474)

Far right: Pale blue shantung silk lined coat, £1,135, and off-white shantung silk shirt dress, £595, both by Ralph Lauren, 143 New Bond Street, London W1 (tel 0171-481 4967), and Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW1. Silver ring with pearl, £75, by Helena Rohrer (see before)

Below: Electric blue shantung silk shirt, £175, by DKNY. Crystal earrings, £170, by Lalique (see before)



Every once in a while a fashion detail surfaces that captures the collective imagination. It might be a theme - viz Woody Allen's *Amie Hall* in the 1970s - or a silhouette - the formless black layers of the 1980s. This decade we have taken a fancy to fabric and in a big way. No longer satisfied to let cut and colour tell the whole story, we now demand much more from cloth.

We want luxury, sophistication, character and texture. All criteria merge in this year's new favourite: shantung, a plain weave, slub silk fabric. Strictly speaking, of course, there is nothing new about shantung. The stuff of couture dreams and beloved of royals, it has hovered on fashion's periphery since the mid-1940s. Emerging from time to time, usually for snappy tailored pieces through the 1950s and

1960s, it has subsequently contented itself as the perfect material for wedding and evening dresses. Until now. Today this naturally uneven, subtly lustrous fabric has left the ballroom for the high street, as couturiers and design-led retailers alike have rediscovered its possibilities. Why shantung should be making a comeback is not so surprising. The long-running

fascination for beautiful fabrics with surface interest meant that its time was sure to come. And the more recent desire for high-shine synthetics like satinised nylon and polyester has led the way for this spirit of glossiness. If slippery, satiny shift dresses were just a little too bright, shiny, clingy and young for most of us, then shantung may well be what we are looking for.

Which leads to a third advantage. After a period of soft, loose, fluid forms, it is high time for a silhouette with bite. Shantung offers crispness, structure and modernity. And class.

Shantung is not a funky fabric and its retrospective roots have inspired designers as diverse as Gianfranco Ferré and Vivienne Westwood to rework classic styles from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s for this summer's collections.

Shirtwaister dresses, capri pants and simple shell tops, safari shirts, swing coats, shift dresses, tunics and A-line skirts have all figured prominently on the catwalks and will find their way on to smart retail shelves.

The key to shantung revisited lies in its wearability. "What's so great is that you can take a couture fabric and use it in a sporty way, that's what makes it new," says Dilly Williams, designer of Liberty's Own Label collection, who has included a shantung tunic top and capri pants in this summer's line.

Lucille Lewin of Whistles agrees. "I intended it to be a day-time fabric," she says. "It should look casual and sexy, not grand and dressy." Like Williams, she was looking for a fabric to follow on from last year's shiny satin - something less flat, more up-front. It might also be argued that with none of the harsh glossiness of satin, shantung will have more lasting attractions.

ture, what gives shantung its high profile is its amazing ability to take pigments. While the jumps and knots in the weave do not lend themselves to successful printing, the colours that can be achieved are jewel-like in their clarity. No wonder then that Liberty favours grass green and orange. Whistles offers gold and turquoise and DKNY are selling out fast of hot red, electric blue and sprigot. By contrast, pastel shades retain an icy freshness at Ralph Lauren, Jil Sander and MaxMara and white looks crisp, modern and discreet at Valentino.

The fact that so many designers, at all levels of the market, have picked up on the shantung story, has naturally led to a wide variety of looks, not least in the fabric itself. It has also led to some confusion as to just what constitutes a true shantung.

Shantung is not what it was. Originally the term defined a rough weave fabric, made of raw silk yarns on hand looms in the Shantung province of China. Today, very little comes from China and the name has almost become generic, a handy description for almost any fabric with a slub, such as the rougher dupions from India, for example, or a heavyweight pongee. Some British companies, such as Henry Brand, successfully manufacture their own shantungs.

As with most things, you get what you pay for with a slub silk fabric - wholesale prices range from £5 a metre for a low-grade dupion, to £85 a metre for a couture shantung. And as beautiful as it looks, the message is buyer beware. Less expensive fabrics will be less stable as lightweight warp yarns and heavyweight weft yarns can occasionally separate, leading to weak seams and fraying.

Not ideally suited for clothes with a snug fit, shantung has been used here and there for unlined, slim-line pants, so extra strain should be expected on hips and rear.

At its best, shantung should be used to follow the contours of the body, rather than cling to it. Think of the A-line dresses and shifts by Hardy Amies and Norman Hartnell in the 1950s and 1960s, as worn by Princess Anne, or clean, sharp tailoring with neat revers or mandarin collars.

A scout around the best second-hand dress shops, such as Steinberg and Tolkein in Kings Road, London SW5, could reap dividends for those hankering after the real thing.

However, for anyone wary of adding pure silk to her daytime wardrobe, the spirit of shantung has a more accessible side.

Synthetic yarns recreate the textural, iridescent mood admirably for Marks and Spencer's slim-fit shantung shirts, while Celia Christmas, the design executive at Grace, was happy to use a slubby, subtle sheen acetate/viscose blend for softer, less crisp, sculptural separates this summer.

At Liberty, a linen/viscose shantung effect fabric has been used for dresser, special occasion suits. Regardless of yarn, quality or weight, the good news for admirers of this top drawer cloth is that the feeling for textural fabrics will continue into autumn and beyond.

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Additional research by Tony Glenville.

Photography: Jonathan Root

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Make-up: Karl Williams

OUTDOORS

Fishing / Tom Fort

Born-again flyman remains tongue-tied

I fear I may be in danger of becoming a bore. So what's new, did I hear someone say? I will ignore that. The thing is, I have acquired a new skill, and I feel absurdly pleased about it. Actually, I'm not sure that "skill", with its connotation of accomplishment, is the right word. Let us say that I have learnt something, which at my time of life is quite a feat.

It's been a bit of a struggle, demanding of me attributes with which I am not over-blessed - among them manual dexterity, concentration, and a capacity for remaining silent and listening. The rewards, though, have been great. I have delved into a world which had previously been a mystery to me, and found that its mysteries were not beyond me.

I have some of the fruits before me as I write. No one would be deceived for a moment into thinking they had been created by an expert. They are scruffy, ungainly, bedraggled, but at the same time,

they are recognisably what they are supposed to be. And I have a suspicion that one or two may do the business.

They are flies, and I was taught to tie them by a long-suffering man called Ian Hockley. Quite why he should have subjected himself to the punishing task of conducting evening classes at Newbury College through the dreary months of winter is beyond me. It certainly wasn't for the money, as the fees were piffling.

I suspect that his motive was purely virtuous, to infect others with his own enthusiasm. It certainly had that effect with me, and I am sure with the others in the class. I found the whole experience absorbing.

The purpose of tying a fly is simple: to use fur, feather, silk, and a few other materials to create an imitation or impression of an item that a trout might care to eat. It is assembled around a hook, so that the trout - if deceived - will pay the price. This art of deception has inspired a phenomenal outpouring of human ingenuity. Thousands upon thousands of more or less convincing counterfeits have been devised. Even as new dictionaries codify them, magazine articles by the score push the boundaries back further.

Flourishing businesses have sprung up to satisfy the great armies of fly tiers. A catalogue will offer a score of different vices to grip the hook; a glittering array of



assorted pliers, bobbin holders, dubbing needles, hair stackers, whip finishers and other ironmongery; a dozen species of hook; feathers from half the inhabitants of wood and hedgerow; fur from a wide range of our four-footed

friends; a vast medley of synthetics which are increasingly replacing the traditional staples. Fly tying can be complex, a preserve for eggheads and professors. Fortunately it can also be quite straightforward. In our class, we stuck mainly to the basics.

We learned to tie the Pheasant Tail nymph, one of the dead-end of all fish takers, and one of the simplest, using nothing more than copper wire and three fibres from the pheasant's back end. We moved on to the shrimp, a creature which our tutor explained tends to turn a trifle pink at periods of sexual activity. "Don't we all?" murmured one of the wags.

Later I managed a serviceable mayfly; a decent Walker's Sedge (a

great slayer on summer evenings); two rather uncouth Mallard and Claret; a hopeless Imita which looked as if it had been savaged by the cat; a Lum's Particular of passionable fidelity; an Elk Hair caddis which might come in handy; and two Cul de Canard olives for which I cherish high hopes.

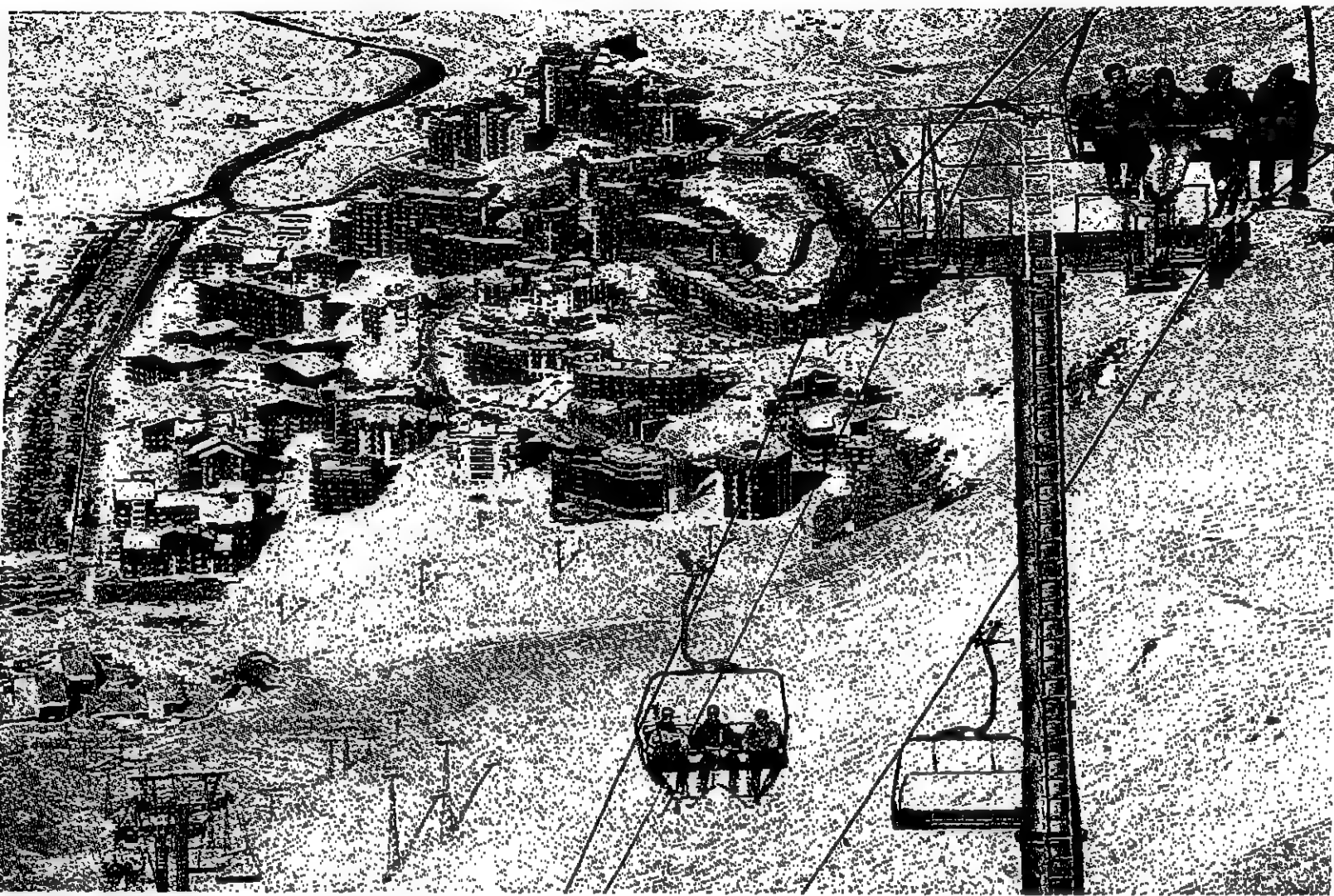
A combination of extreme cack-handedness, defective eyesight and inattentiveness relegated me to the bottom of our class. Some tasks were beyond me - for instance, the Ginger Quill we tackled towards the end of the course, which demanded an unattainable fineness with peacock fibres and startling wings.

In this mediocrity lies my hope of being excluded from the kingdom

of fly tying bores. For once you achieve competence, the temptation grows stronger. You fish with flies you tied yourself, and tell your friends how much more satisfying it is to catch trout on them. Then you start devising your own creations, using the hair from your dog, the fur from grandma's coat, the stuffing from your favourite armchair.

The next thing you know, you catch so many fish on your invention that you are moved to inform a wider public of its irresistible attractions - so you write an article about it. Your dream is to open a dictionary, and find it there with your name appended.

As yet, I have not used any of my flies. When I have, we will see how immune I am to these seductive snares. In this case, my advice should you encounter a large, bespectacled, ill-dressed angling correspondent holding a fat trout and with an expression of fatuous complacency on his face is: avoid him.



Unbearable struggle attempts at introducing American standards of lift queue were doomed to failure at Val d'Isère

Skiing

Blowing hot and cold

For Arnie Wilson, it has been a strange, unpredictable winter on the slopes

The ski season ended with more of the capricious weather that has baffled tour operators and skiers almost all winter long. Although the Alps were packed with skiers enjoying a cocktail of fresh snow and sunshine in need of a rest or at least a time-out, were swiftly unenthused for an excursion to Vermont.

While Colorado sizzled in the heat - bringing out Swedish snowboarders on skis at Aspen Highlands and worshippers to an open-air, Easter-day service on top of Aspen mountain - New England froze. Blizzards spread as far south as Virginia as New England's record year for snow continued.

As we strolled through Denver in shirtsleeves, it was in the 80s; a few hours later we stepped off the aircraft in Boston into a wintry landscape. My skis, although in need of a rest or at least a time-out, were swiftly unenthused for an excursion to Vermont.

It has been a strange, unpredictable winter. In my travels around 50 ski areas on both sides of the Atlantic, I found just about every known variety of snow, including one or two of which even the Eskimos - with so many different words to describe snow - would not have heard.

The sort of snow which fell in Saint Lary in the French Pyrenees, late in March was typical. "This snow," reported my guide as we skied an exhilarating but rather sticky off-piste itinerary through a beautiful and remote valley, "is too young."

Some Italian and Pyrenean resorts, which during the earlier part of the season "stole" more than their usual share of snow from more northerly neighbours, managed to patch up some of their slopes with fresh snow after sweltering weather. The Italian resort of Sestriere, also enjoying a heatwave, was torn between keeping the downhill slopes open and the uphill task of preparing the resort for next February's world championships.

In 1999, it will be Val's turn for the event. But before then, the shape of America's ski industry could have changed dramatically. Ralcorp Holdings, which owns Keystone, Arapahoe Basin and Breckenridge, has fuelled speculation that these Summit County resorts might be for sale.

Two or three ski conglomerates are beginning to dominate the North American ski areas. Intrawest now controls six resorts stretching from Quebec to the Californian Sierras and is fancied to make an offer for Keystone/Breckenridge. And American Skiing Company, recently formed by the estimated \$107m deal to merge the Maine-based LBO



For sale? Breckenridge could be part of a US shake-up

Enterprises and S-R-I Ltd, owns nine resorts.

According to Joe Micheletto, chief executive officer of Ralcorp (a non-skier who says that at 59 he is too old to learn): "More and more you are going to see the ski industry dominated by a handful of big players capable of paying out the big cheques."

Of his willingness to sell Keystone, Arapahoe Basin and Breckenridge, he said: "We're forecasting a record year for profits and we're in a very strong position. Analysts have said our resorts are worth between \$300m and \$325m - possibly as much as \$350m. If you came along and offered that sort of money, we would probably sell to you. Intrawest has to covet this property. If the offer does not come, I'll be absolutely shocked."

Even though skiers might find some of their favourite haunts under new management next winter, it should make little difference to the product. Some may even improve. But one thing they may find is that the seemingly

the boarders are saying that skiers - if admitted to their special "reserves" - cut the corners of their jumps and "half-pipes".

One solution, being tried out in a few North American resorts, is to mix skiers and snowboarders in special theme parks. Peoli Peaks in Indiana, for example, has one called Jurassic Park.

It is thought that by calling these special areas "terrain parks", it will help to blur the distinction between the factions. There is even a move to marry the disciplines with the term "snow-sliders": one ski resort has already employed a "director of snow-sliding". It is unusual to find North Americans scrapping on the slopes. It is much more likely to happen in European lift queues. American queues - or lift-lines as they call them - are much more civilised.

To my surprise I found the lift operators in Val d'Isère paying lip service to the American system, at least during the frenetically busy peak hours in high season during the French holidays.

Faced with an almost unbearable struggle to get on to the Bellevue chair at 9.30am, I could feel my blood pressure rising as I was forced by gravity and the proximity of wall-to-wall skiers to elbow and inch my way towards a barrier which seemed never to get any nearer.

The hard-pressed lift operator's heroic attempt to ensure that each chair was filled to capacity was sadly foiled - unless the queue is properly channelled through crowd-control barriers, the operator does not stand a chance.

It is fashionable in Aspen, Colorado's most fashionable resort, to Federal Express your skis home rather than struggle to carry them - and many already have. But die-hard skiers are lingering on.

Although Aspen's other three mountains have closed, the town's local peak, Ajax Mountain, plans to remain open at weekends until May. Arapahoe Basin, one of Colorado's highest ski areas, is hoping to remain open well into the summer.

For skiers who want guaranteed snow even longer, there is always the South American option. Resorts such as Portillo, Valle Nevado, La Pava and Termas de Chillan in Chile, and Gran Catedral (Bariloche) and Las Lenas in Argentina beckon from late June onwards.

Big business and resort conglomerates have yet to infiltrate the Andes, where skiing is still more of a leisurely pastime than an industry. A quieter, more mystical experience for skiers who prefer the old days, it is probably much nicer that way.

Gardening / Robin Lane Fox

Power to your plant palette

If you were asked to name the most potent weapon in the gardener's armoury, you would probably not mention colour. Personally, I would choose the admirable glyphosate. Andrew Lawson, however, a keen gardener and a brilliant photographer of plants,

in his new book he tells us that colour is our most potent weapon and, as so many of us act here by instinct, I would like to draw attention to this remarkably produced book.

The last 12 months have not been good news for colour-planners. An early spring and an early, hot summer led to an unexpectedly good autumn and now to a second spring which has been slow to appear. These dislocated seasons upset the careful colour-planners, to my secret amusement.

Perhaps they really do spend hours, planning the exact matches of colour for each week in their borders. Perhaps they do, but when nature speeds up her clock in 1994 or 1995, I seldom hear these planners complaining that their accelerated gardens are looking hideous. They find some other contrast or harmony to delight them and almost persuade us that they had planned it all along.

Instinct and what financial readers call gut feeling are my guide in these matters. I know what I hate: stale rose-pink and the shade of cream in Arzac which always looks slightly off. Many of these colours appealed to post-second world war pussy-cat planters and sometimes, as in one of Lawson's photographs, they combined them with large expanses of yellow-variegated leaves.

If pressed, I would say that I liked clear colours, that I liked to limit them but not isolate them, and that I particularly like clear reds with white, blues and pale yellow, red and green and orange with dark violet-purple.

These preferences vary from season to season and according to the strength of sunlight. In spring, you cannot go far wrong; although one of the Oxford gardeners nearly did go wrong two years ago by combining huge blocks of purple and magenta tulips with mustard-yellow wall flowers.

There are four particular joys to Lawson's *Gardener's Book of Colour* (Frances Lincoln, £25). The first by itself would make the book a raging buy. The colour photographs are the best I have seen and have been admirably reproduced. Their reds are true without jumping off the page; their soft shots of pink and silver are differentiated; the blues

are a dream. I gather that the secret is to use a slow exposure and if not, to look out for one of Lawson's teaching sessions.

The book's second merit is that it has gone to infinite trouble. Colours are never there when you want them, but Lawson takes on a tour of almost every imaginable combination in beautiful plantings from Northumberland to Devon. Each is then detailed in a key to the varieties of plant which make them up.

The list of acknowledgements is an invitation to widen our garden-visiting, from Hadspen in Somerset to Hertford House in Northumberland. So often, books on colour betray their text in their illustrations but this one has plainly taken years and is a rarity.

The third merit is that Lawson helps to explain what many of us are doing by gut feeling or taste. He cites Vic-

torians together in the order of the Colour Wheel, which is so fashionable nowadays. He is excellent on white, a problem for pure colour theorists.

He is even better on the varying colours of the day and the different effects of viewing trees with the sun directly on them and the sun between you and them. He even has some excellent comments on the effect of women in white dresses when viewed in green grass against the sun. If Frances Lincoln could hire da Vinci for a sequel, I would be even more interested to read it.

Lawson reminds us of the preferences of other painters and designers. Monet, after all, planted a special order of sunset colours facing west where it would be lit up by the sunset light. Lawson takes us through the various combinations and comments magnanimously on their merits. He suggests the juxtaposition of purple-violet with deep red and illustrates this exotic mixture with different kinds of clematis. He explains why I like red and green and why blues and whites look so good in the evening or in shade.

He is rather keen on the modern revival of hectic reds and oranges and the book-jacket has a shocker of a combination in burnt orange and the difficult mauve-purple of the upright Lythrum, a plant which I will continue to ban.

There are hours of delight in this book, but after reading it I am left with a comforting question. Are there any pairings of colour which Lawson would rule out of court as incorrect? The various considerations of theory seem to cancel each other out.

We are told that there can be marit in colours which are neighbours on the Colour Wheel; we are also told that there is merit in opposites. Differences of tone can justify pairings which the wheel by itself might exclude. If not, there is the added inter-play of saturation and purity and behind them all, the redeeming presence of sunlight, shade and the differing tones of seasonal greens.

I leave this book thinking that it justifies anything, so long as it is planned and limited to a few main colours at once. Andrew Lawson is plainly a more tolerant chap than I am. The sight of roundabout plantings by courtesy of all our council taxes persuades me each year that there is a municipal downside to colour theory, and that there is a missing Town Hall factor which also belongs in the picture when the lens and the eye which chooses are not so sensitively tuned.

Usually, it is traced back to Victorian theorists but I would like to put in a word for Leonardo da Vinci



Colouring in pink and white 'Lupinus' The Chatsworth is partnered with 'Rose' Wife of Bath

TRAVEL

Watersports

Hooked on the Old Man and his sea

Watersports are on the crest of a wave and over three pages FT writers explore what is available to those willing to take the plunge. On offer are yachts, whitewater rafting, scuba diving, windsurfing and various means of messing about in boats. Keith Wheatley casts off in the wake of Ernest Hemingway for a spot of game fishing

After a few days in Key West the urge to fish becomes almost irresistible, even to those who do not care for rod-and-line. Partly, it is the mythology of the place.

Papa Hemingway lived here, tapping out bestsellers in the mornings and game fishing from his launch Pilar in the sleepy afternoons. Re-reading *The Old Man and The Sea* is fatal.

One begins to dream of those big marlin just offshore, line screaming out from the big reel and a certain grace under pressure in the fighting chair. And the boats themselves look so sexy. Rows of them tied to the wharf at the foot of Front Street. These vessels have the power and sense of purpose of a Corvette Stingray or a Winchester hunting rifle.

Afternoon Delight was 47ft long, twin 400hp diesels, and with a local reputation for finding fish. The price of \$400 for half a day seemed a little steep, even to follow in the footsteps of Hemingway.

The previous afternoon I had made a pilgrimage to the writer's home, paid \$6 to tour its cool elegance, viewed his Remington portable and stroked the numerous descendants of his famous cats.

Nearly 100 times that sum to take the fantasy offshore sounded a hom-age too far.

However, skipper John Mathews was nothing if not a good salesman. He provided a short tour of Afternoon Delight's facilities, which included an onboard fax for last-minute bookings.

He hinted that I was lucky that a group of Texan cardiac surgeons, who often flew from Houston and took the boat, had cancelled at short notice. The deck log, featuring a 290lb sailfish caught the previous day, lay open on the saloon table.

It was graciously done. Mathews knew I was firmly hooked and just needed playing gently. Best of all, he knew a couple of weekending Good Ol' Boys from the mid-west who might want to share the charter with me.

Tom Delaney was a road-building contractor from Wisconsin. "Snow's

so thick in the winter, you can't do anything much except go off on vacation," he said as Afternoon Delight powered down the fairway channel leading to the sparkling cobalt waters of the Gulf.

First honour fell to Dennis Gads, Delaney's son-in-law. By now Afternoon Delight was about 5 miles offshore, cruising the edge of the coral reef that shelters the Florida Keys.

As he played the reel, the charter party began to grow excited but the bored demeanour of AJ, the boat's mate, gave us a distinct clue that no records were about to be broken.

As the fish came to the stern, its colours more than made up for a lack of excitement with the relatively meagre 40lb size. It was a dolphin (fish, not mammal) and striped along its back with vivid yellow and blue markings.

To European eyes, used to the grey inhabitants of the Channel and north Atlantic, it was a truly wondrous fish. But it was simply squeezed into the ice chest with ill-humour.

Not least by AJ, a Key West red-neck straight from the days of wrecking and rum-smuggling that made the community (the southern most tip of the continental US) the richest city in Florida during the late 19th century.

His big thrills, and big bucks, came from acting as a guide to boat-owners who wanted to take a semi-illegal trip to Cuba, just 95 miles away. While US citizens are not barred, the trade embargo remains in force. "It's not illegal to go there," said AJ. "You're just not allowed to buy anything. Course, you do, that's the point of going."

"So on the way back you drink all the liquor, smoke all the cigars and throw the receipts over the side. You tell the coast guard you anchored up a creek, fishing all week. But if they find any evidence, you're in trouble."

AJ made it sound like El Dorado. "Cheapest wine you'll ever drink, fantastic restaurants and beautiful women. And it costs pennies. Fantastic fishing. Last trip we caught three specimen blue marlin in an afternoon. One of the kids in the



The big catfish waiting a boat for game fishing off Key West offers big thrills and aching shoulders

Mark Pepper

party hooked a 300-pounder on a hand line." Over the rainbow, Masawa, the day grew hotter as we trolled up and down the reef and the hideous dolphin was still the only fish in the box. Pelicans swooping and diving around our towed bait, quarter-of-a-mile astern,

gave sudden optimism that the big fish might be around.

Suddenly my inert 8ft pole became a live, twisting arc. I could barely hold it and shuffle to the fighting chair. Strapped in, I began to reel in whenever there was a touch of slack in the thick green

line. After 10 minutes my shoulders and biceps ached desperately.

The charter party were whooping but AJ was ominously silent.

Fifteen minutes later we saw why as the "catch" came to within 50 yards of the stern. A greedy, confused pelican had taken the mack-

erel bait and had the hook right through its bill. There was no choice but to keep reeling in the huge angry bird in order to free the barb and release it.

When we hauled it aboard, after a struggle that left me exhausted and dispirited, AJ quickly removed the

hook and allpped the unharmed bird back into the sea. He was extraordinarily gentle with the pelican, while cursing its vast flapping bulk continuously. Afternoon Delight headed back to Key West. I bet this never happened to Papa.

Whitewater Rafting

Rapids reaction force

Guy Marks runs the gamut of wild water from Austria to Zimbabwe

I could hear the fast flowing instructions above the thunder of the rapids: "Paddle right! Lean forwards! Hold on!" A torrent of grey alpine water exploded on unseen rocks just as the little rubber boat approached them. The raft, its seven paying passengers and the helmsman disappeared in this burst of white water.

In a split second they bounced back into view, their faces beaming with exhilaration. A stretch of calm water followed and their heart rates gradually returned to normal. The river meandered through the deep green forests of the Tyrol in the Austrian Alps.

It would be easy to drift into a false sense of security as this magnificent mountain scenery goes by. In a few more moments, though, the river turned a corner and another rapid appeared. Another dose of adrenaline brought the rafters to new heights of excitement and the instructions rang out once more.

A couple of hours on the river is all it takes to inject adventure and excitement into a holiday. As the trend moves away from the passive break, so whitewater rafting is becoming big business all around the world. Last year, about 100,000 people took the plunge in Tyrol alone.

The sport is relatively new but has been established long enough for mistakes to have been made and lessons learned. With its strong skiing industry, Austria has had its fair share of tourism based on exciting but potentially hazardous sports. The government has kept a close eye on the rising popularity of whitewater

rafting and has taken positive and practical action.

Austria introduced legislation six years ago specifically for rafting.

It laid down regulations to ensure the sport is run safely and it is the only country to insist that rafting guides hold a state-tested licence. There are regulations that also apply to the equipment and safe running of the trips, such as taking two guides in the raft if the river is of the higher grades.

Since these regulations came into force there have been no serious accidents at any of the commercially run rafting businesses in Tyrol, which must make it the safest place outside of North America to raft whitewater.

Of course, there is nothing stopping private rafters from ignoring the regulations and all common sense at their peril.

An internationally accepted system of grading rivers has been established. These run from 1, which is flat water with little current and mild waves, to 6, which is unrunnable with walls of white water and not commercially viable. The higher the grade, the more exciting the ride.

Grade 3 is moderate with waves, swift currents and narrow channels. In such a river section there would be obstructions such as rocks and gravel



Pounding hearts on wild water: a relatively new sport but lessons have been learned

Guy Marks

banks. Grades 4 and 5 are difficult and strenuous with steep drops and obstructions, powerful waves and the possibility of overturning the raft.

It seems that wherever there are holidaymakers, the more exciting sections of rivers are becoming whitewater rafting sites. Nepal is one of the cheaper places to go rafting.

The Sun Kosi river is the most popular, easily accessible from Kathmandu, and with the excitement of grade 3 and 4 rapids.

There are two main seasons for rafting in Nepal. April and May are popular, with melting snow swelling the rivers. October holds the best conditions as the waters are high after the

monsoon and the skies clear and bright.

North America is another favourite destination. The best rivers tend to be in the national parks which brings them under government control and operators must have permits. Fear of litigation means that safety is high. Central and South American

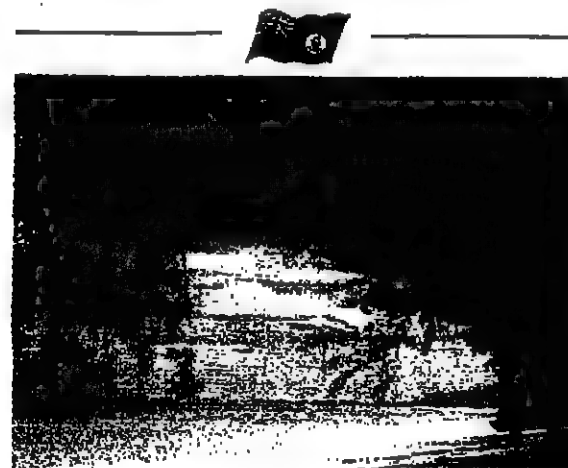
countries have their fair share of exciting rivers. There are the Pacuare and Reventazon in Costa Rica. The Urubamba River in Peru offers rapids of grade 2 to 3 and these can be rafted for a few hours or as part of a longer excursion to the lost city of the Incas, Machu Picchu.

Scotland has several rivers where the sport is becoming popular. But the consensus is that there is one river that stands out above all others - rafting the Zambesi below the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe is regarded as the most exciting one-day rafting trip anywhere in the world.

The journey only takes a few hours but the course of 10 rapids takes whitewater rafting to its extremes. The rapids are all grade 4 to 5 and there is even the infamous rapid number 6, which is grade 6. This is unrunnable and the participants breathe a sigh of relief when the rafts pull over to the rocks and are carried around the rapids on dry land.

The best time is October and November, when the water is low and creates a more exciting run as it crashes over the exposed rocks. In May and June, rafting is likely to be suspended as the flow of water can be just too great. These waters are dangerous. People can and do flip their rafts, fall out and have fatal accidents.

Free can be contacted in Austria on tel: 0643-5523 6035; Adrift (London) on tel: 0181-874 4967; Croft-Na-Caber (Scotland) tel: 01887-330588; Splash (Scotland) tel: 01887-829706; White-water USA (England) tel: 01753-644795; Sheerwater (Zimbabwe) tel: 00263-134471.



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London Docklands

A waterway for all reasons

The chap from the Development Corporation said it was policy to allocate watersports in London's rejuvenated Docklands according to environmental criteria. Noisy jet and water skiers in the Royal Docks next to City Airport, silent sailors next to the grandeur of Canary Wharf and canoeists in the quieter reaches of Shadwell.

I remembered this while struggling to stay upright on a bucking jet-ski in the chilly waters of George V dock as a BAe 146 jet came off the runway and virtually parted my wet hair.

Given that many local councils are imposing strict controls on these noisy, exhilarating machines at coastal beauty spots, it makes sense to use them in the centre of a city - and the water is cleaner than in many estuaries.

The Docklands Watersports Club is popular with jet-ski enthusiasts. "We have had people move home from Kensington to the Isle of Dogs to be closer to us," said Marlon Phillips, who runs DWSC with her husband Mervyn. They provide rental machines (£30 an hour, including wetsuits and safety gear) or store and launch members' own.

Cheap facilities are common across Docklands watersports. At Westferry Road, an independent charity operates a beauti-

fully equipped centre. With Canary Wharf as a grandstand, one of the most popular activities is dragon-boat racing on Millwall Dock.

Lines of these Hong Kong-inspired war canoes can be seen pulled up on the pontoons, and corporations such as UBS, Texaco and Swissair enter staff teams in summer evening regattas. The annual member-

ship is £50. "These fantastic facilities at unbelievable prices must be one of London's best kept secrets," said the centre's co-ordinator, Frank Dewar.

The Shadwell Basin Project has a sailing location that any famous yacht club would give its Royal Warrant for. The SBSC keeps its Bosun and Wayfarer dinghies on moorings just off the Prospect of Whitby

pub from Easter to December. "Our ambition is a trip across the Channel," said SBSC's Stuart Keep.

Canoeing is Shadwell's other speciality. A course of seven two-hour lessons on a Tuesday night costs £55 and will have a beginner happily paddling upstream to Tower Bridge by the end.

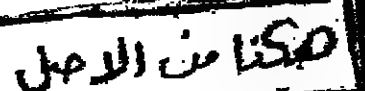
Keith Wheatley

Docklands Watersport Club, Woolwich Manor Way E16, tel: 0171-511 7000; Docklands Sailing and Watersports, Westferry Road, tel: 0171-537 2626; Shadwell Basin Project, Glaimis Road, tel: 0171-481 4210.

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TRAVEL

Scuba Diving

Tying up the reef at a rate of knots

James Henderson lets us into the secret of why diving in the tropics is unimaginably different

Coral reefs are so pretty and delicate that it is easy to forget that they are not flowers. Pity the poor French scientist, Jean André Peyssonnel, who in 1726 came up with the outrageous claim that they were animals rather than marine shrubs as was then thought. He was ridiculed into exile by the Paris Academy of Sciences and lived out the rest of his days on the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, dying without recognition of his discovery.

The Caribbean caters well for scuba divers. There are dive-shops on most of the islands and it is perfectly possible to try out the sport while you are there. You do not need to be trained or to go on a specific scuba diving holiday. With a "resort" course available in most islands, it is possible to get underwater within a day - it consists of safety instruction and a test in a pool followed by a guided open-water dive on the reef.

Scuba diving in the tropics is unimaginably different from diving in the UK. It is less daunting, the sea is warmer and good visibility brings a certain confidence. It is also a lot more interesting, because

the rewards, in the corals and the tropical fish, are more immediate and immeasurably greater.

The established diving destinations in the Caribbean are the Cayman Islands, which have a justified reputation for well-managed walls (sheer and close to the surface), and Bonaire (a Dutch island off the coast of South America), where the corals that cluster on the sloped drop-offs are particularly brightly coloured. Both have done a good job in managing their reefs and offer a reliable diving package, though the Caymans have become almost too popular, and you may find yourself one of 30 or 40 divers unleashed on the wall at a time.

There are plenty of other impressive places to dive. Two that have gained a reputation recently are Saba in the Leeward Islands and the little-known Turks and Caicos

Islands. They each benefit from low fishing pressure and from low freshwater and sediment run-off which enable the corals to grow in a pristine environment. As they came late on the scene, they were able to set up National Parks before there was any serious damage to the reefs.

The Turks and Caicos, which stand at the south-easterly tip of the Bahamian archipelago, are the heads of huge limestone columns

that rise from 7,000ft of deep blue ocean, just cutting the surface. Their walls are sheer-sided in places and there are coral outcrops and spur and groove formations - channels of sand between ridges of coral encrusted rock.

On the reefs are whole hemispheres of brain coral, barrel sponges like circus cannon, the tangled, interlocked antlers of stag-horn, and leaf patterned gorgonians, flat as cheese graters,

quivering in unpredictable currents. It always pays to look closer when diving. Individual polyps live in colonies of hundreds like jostling hydras or molar running riot; even encrusting algae contribute to the colourful effect and anemones snap back into their sheaths if you disturb the water around them.

The fish world is an eternal surprise too. Moray eels mouth at you in silent warning from their crevices and rays have been known to

turn somersaults. To swim in a school of thousands of tiny fish-fry is a wonderful experience: they keep a constant density and direction in the face of the current and as you swim through, they swirl around you like a silken cloud, darting and then settling in perfect unison, responding minutely to your every movement.

The submarine world comes alive if you know what is going on and it repays those who do some reading in advance. Why do thousands of lobsters congregate and gallop head to tail across the seabed of the Bahamas? How did the Monty Python team have a hand in the design of so many fish? And what is a superman when he's at home on this reef?

Saba could not be more different from the Turks and Caicos. In place of the blinding-white sandflats and

coral outcrops on submerged columns, Saba is a pyramid-shaped, volcanic lump. It has only one true reef and its sand is grey. Underwater, its slopes are irregular, with satellite pinnacles and boulders stacked on one another as they fell, creating caverns, overhangs and an archway. The slopes are encrusted with elkhorn corals like huge upturned hands and tube sponges erect as exclamation marks.

The fish life is excellent with schools of twittering sergeant majors - striped and extremely aggressive when guarding their eggs - angelfish in luxurious colours, and parrot fish that nibble at the polyps sifting the food and spitting out the remains. They create sand by doing this - hold your breath on a night dive, and you'll hear them munching away.

On Tint Reef we came across a cleaning station where a thick-lipped and grumpy grouper was loitering at an uncomfortable angle just off the rocks while a purple-bodied Pederson's cleaning shrimp crept around him gingerly, cleaning up his teeth and gills. The shrimp gets a meal, but there's an implicit understanding that the bigger fish will not make a meal of him.

James Henderson travelled to the Turks and Caicos Islands with Caribbean Connection (tel: 0244-341131). The Turks and Caicos Tourist Board is on 0181-964 5198. Saba can be contacted on 00 599 4 62231, fax 599 4 62250.

Most dive shops in the Caribbean work under the PADI flag and nearly all offer a resort course, which enables you to try the sport out and continue to dive for two weeks.

Contact PADI International in Bristol (tel: 0117-971 1717), which has details of dive schools around the country. The British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) is structured around clubs. They currently have a "Learn to Dive in 99" programme (tel: freephone 0800-972222). BSAC groups offer "Proficiency" training (telescopic work) and "Confined water" dives in the UK, open-water dives abroad. You should check your insurance and you will need to obtain a medical certificate before you are allowed to dive.

Windsurfing

Age goes by the board in a fair wind

Michael Donne was converted to windsurfing at 55. Thirteen years on, he is still going strong

Have you ever been envious of those bright young things wafting silently and smoothly across the water on boards with sails like beautiful butterflies' wings, or on wilder days admired the wave-jumpers cowering from crest to crest, believing that such delights are not for you, because you are not so young any more?

If so, I have news for you, because windsurfing, or as some would have it, "boardsailing", is far from being a sport exclusively for the macho tribe or fanatics.

Anyone can do it, male or female, young, middle-aged or even elderly, all you need is the will, and a reasonable level of physical fitness.

Over recent years, windsurfing has seen, in the words of the Royal Yachting Association (the sport's UK national governing body), a "meteoric rise in popularity in its short history. In 1988, there were only 12 boards in existence. Now there are half a million windsurfers in the UK alone, with numbers increasing every year as more and more people turn to windsurfing as a cheap,

across the bay and back, jumped ashore and declared: "There you are: it's so easy, anyone can do it."

Persistence is necessary because, although you can undeniably imbibe the basics within a few hours (along with perhaps a good deal of water), it takes some time thereafter to master the sport, depending on wind and water conditions, and just how far you want to go with it.

If you do not have natural balance or good co-ordination, do not despair: with patience you can develop enough skill to enjoy what you are doing, even while perhaps recognising that you will never become national champion.

What you do need to realise is that some time thereafter to master the sport, depending on wind and water conditions, and just how far you want to go with it.

And that does take time. There are five levels: from the very basics of learning how to stand on the board and pull up the sail, through to progressively improving one's technique, climbing up the "learning curve" from "long boards" (the fundamental board used in the early stages and for light winds, rather like an elegant plank), through to a "short board" or "stinker" which only the more experienced use for high-wind, high-speed sailing. Like many other sports, what level you reach and how quickly depends entirely upon yourself.

The jargon, too, takes some understanding, but here the RYA also helps, with a glossary prepared by Boards magazine that explains everything from an "aerial" - a short-board manoeuvre performed in the air - through to a "wishbone" - an old-fashioned name for the boom that you hold (the boom is attached to the mast and the sail is held taut by it).

In between there are many wondrous words and phrases such as a "daggerboard" (a retractable, foot-operated device which gives stability to the board), a "lollipop" (jumping yourself and the board together while sailing down a wave-face), and a "wipeout" (taking an abrupt and unintentional plunge off the board anywhere and anywhere - and we all do, often).

Then there is the question of cost. Lessons cost a few pounds an hour. The £500 the RYA mentions is the cost of a beginner's board, sail and boom (the "rig"), but you can go up from there to much larger sums, depending upon your own skill development and ambition.

I began on a long-board, tried a variety of short boards, and have now settled on a mid-length board which suits my size, temperament and the time I can give to windsurfing. I have several sails, large and small, but most often use a 5.2 metre one which is a good all-rounder that I can cope with in a variety of wind conditions. I know my limitations.

accessable and fun-filled alternative to more expensive water sports. For as little as £500 and the cost of a few lessons, you could soon be among them."

That is no sales brochure hype. I can confirm it, because I have done it. I first took it up 13 years ago, when I was 55, and I am still at it today, (although I must admit that all my adult life I have been a rowing man).

Windsurfing has given me many hours of pleasure, excellent exercise, and taken me to many attractive places worldwide.

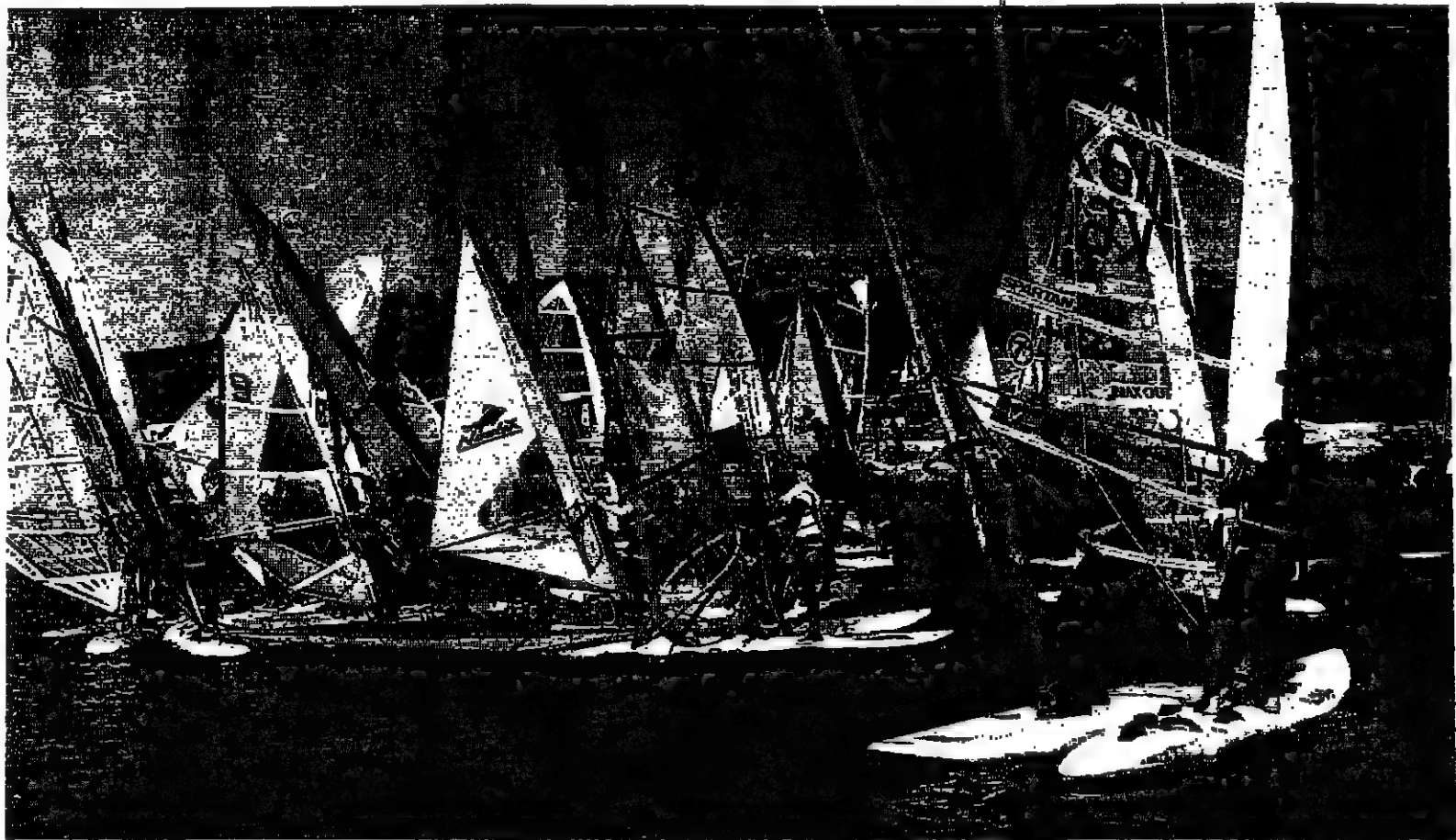
I even bought a timeshare in Lanzarote because the windsurfing was so good. My most recent trip was to Hurgada on the Red Sea coast of Egypt where I windsurfed in between bouts of underwater goggling at the fishes.

What you need to get started, apart from reasonably good health, is information, then determination and thereafter perseverance.

Getting the information is the easy part: the RYA offers it free of charge in a package of illustrated literature listing the large number of RYA-recognised schools located throughout the UK, both on inland waters and around the coasts. The determination is needed to go to a school closest to home, say you want to learn, and lose your dignity falling in the wind - because you will fall in. We all do. I did 30 or so times on my first afternoon, much to the amusement of an eight-year-old onlooker who said smugly: "I'll show you what to do". He promptly sailed away

For clothing, I do recommend a wet-suit: it is essential to help keep out the cold (which can be surprising even on hot days and in tropical climes), and also for preventing those abrasions of knees and elbows that appear no matter how good you think you are.

Contact: The Windsurfing Manager, Royal Yachting Association, RYA House, Romney Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 9YA. Tel: 01703-627400; Fax: 01703-629294.



Under sail: all you need, apart from reasonably good health, is information, determination and perseverance

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مكتبة من الأصول

SPANISH FOOD AND DRINK

Modern tastes and old masters

Jancis Robinson hunts down the best exported Spanish wines

It is, of course, as absurd to devote an article to wines from as large an area as the whole of Spain as it is to do the same for France – arguably more so perhaps since Spain has even more land under vine than its neighbour across the Pyrenees.

One thing is clear about the wines being exported from Spain, however. An increasing proportion are very modern indeed – modern verging on internationalised – in the way of, say, Holiday Inns rather than the stately, and state-run, Paradors that are their indigenous Spanish counterparts.

A stately home should go to anyone able to discern the Catalan origins of Santa Rosa Chardonnay 1995, for example. This full-bodied, glossy Spanish white (with a small proportion of barrel fermentation) is a snip at £3.99 from Victoria Wine and J. Sainsbury – but the hand of flying winemaker Hugh Ryan is more evident than any Spanish influence.

Its Cabernet Sauvignon counterpart, also made by the Ryan team from universal grapes grown in the up-and-coming, high altitude Conca de Barbera wine region, is even more impressive. Carrying the full weight of maturation in good quality American oak, the Castillo de Montlanc Cabernet 1994 costs £5.99 from Fullers and is quite extraordinarily meaty and deep-coloured for vines so young that this was only their second commercial crop.

The wine shops owned by Fullers brewery in and around London have one of the best

selections of Spanish wines in Britain; the head wine buyer used to buy Spanish wine for Oddbins.

Much more truly Spanish – or rather Catalan – than the Ryan wines, for example, is Fuller's confidently lean, apple Can Feixes 1994 at £4.99 from just next door to Conca de Barbera. No nonsense about oak ageing in this wine which perfectly expresses local colour, in this case Parellada grapes grown on some of the highest vineyards in the Penedes region, with a bit of Macabeo and a dash of Chardonnay. The phrase Spanish Chablis springs disconcertingly to mind.

Muri Veteres 1995, £4.25 from Fullers, is another truly Spanish snip – post-Olympics modern Spanish, that is. Sold as Carchelo in the US, it owes its gamy depth of flavour to the Monastrell (aka Mourvedre) grapes which dominate the blend but is given a juicy polish by virtue of its Merlot constituent. Whoever would have thought, five years ago, that the once-despised vineyards of Alicante could produce something of such relative sophistication?

Fullers, and top Tesco stores, stock the fascinating new wave Marques de Grigori wines at around 28 a bottle, many of which bear grape names more familiar in France. There is even a creditable version of Bordeaux's rare Petit Verdot.

Bordeaux varieties clearly flourish in many parts of Spain, untroubled by the clouds that annually threaten their very ripening on the



The Marques de Gellon savours his Cabernet Sauvignon in Mulpion de Tajo, west of Toledo

French Atlantic coast. At a tasting of 47 Spanish reds, for British Airways the other day, we were mildly horrified to find that the most stunning wine of all, by quite a margin, was not something indisputably Spanish but Raimat Cabernet Sauvignon 1991.

Instead, the supple style and American oak-enhanced flavour of this sumptuous wine (served blind and successfully

to my FT colleague and fellow wine writer Edward Pennington-Russell) sits squarely on the Pyrenean fence between Bordeaux and this vast Cava-financed estate reclaimed from the desert of Costers del Segre, north-east Spain.

With the 1991 vintage, Raimat seems finally to have broken into the modern world (the Raimat Tempranillo 1991 is a fine peppery specimen, too).

Thresher/Bottoms Up/Wine Rack stores are just moving from the slightly more rustic 1990 Cabernet to the 1991, which is certainly worth the £6.19 they are asking for both vintages. But bargain hunters should head for the most wine-minded Co-op stores where the official list price of 1990-moving-on-to-1991 is £5.49. And until Monday they are on offer at £4.49.

Classic indulgence from the Costa Brava

Contrary to popular belief, we wine writers spend very little time tasting century-old wines. Which was one of the reasons why I readily accepted an invitation to the Savoy Hotel, in London, to taste selected vintages of Marques de Riscal back to 1871.

The other reason was that we were promised a lunch provided by the Catalan restaurant El Bulli. Ever since seeing a jolly effect that a visit there had had on Simon Hopkinson, one of our more demanding chef-writers, I had been longing to experience this new star in Spain's gastronomic firmament on the Costa Brava.

But I am always trying to cram too much into my life and, encouraged by the precision suggested by the invitation – 12 noon tapas, 12.40pm lunch – had blithely agreed to a 3pm meeting in west London afterwards.

I must have been mad. It was nearly 3pm before we even sat down to our nine-course lunch. It has been too long since I was exposed to Spanish eating habits.

But beforehand was a classic display of Spanish wine tasting, involving macho pyrotechnics with gas cylinders and port tongs (lest the corks crumbled on contact with a corkscrew) and complex manoeuvres ensuring that each of the milling tasters had a sample of both first and second bottles of each vintage. El Bulli's sommelier, Agustin Peris Bayes, showed an unusual combination of boyish charm and efficiency.

This was the first seriously historic array of vintages opened up by Marques de Riscal outside Spain (although the bodega is being courted assiduously by the organisers of the annual Wine Experience to repeat the performance in San Francisco this October).

The first Marques de Riscal was a Spanish diplomat based in Bordeaux in the mid-19th century. Asked by a group of Rioja vine growers to find a Frenchman who would teach them a few winemaking tricks,

he ended up employing the ex-winemaker of Chateau Lanesan in the Medoc himself in a smart new bodega built in Bordeaux.

It was finished in 1886, four years before that of arch rival Marques de Murrieta in Rioja and about the same time as Vega Sicilia's in Ribera del Duero.

Both Marques de Riscal and Vega Sicilia imported vines from Bordeaux (luckily, just before phylloxera was to infect them so disastrously) and it was long Marques de Riscal's USP that its red rioja contains not just the traditional Spanish grapes Tempranillo, Garnacha (Grenache) and – all too

unusually nowadays – Graciano, but also some Cabernet Sauvignon.

Since the varietal make-up of the wines was varied enormously, there were attempts to try to correlate the influence of Cabernet with quality. It was true that the rich, exciting 1945, obviously as stunning a vintage in Rioja as elsewhere, was the star of the show and also contained 76 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon and just 25 per cent Tempranillo.

But both bottles of the powerful 1944 delivered intense, supple, velvety richness which was remarkably similar to the 1945, even though the proportions of these two varieties were almost exactly reversed – another triumph of place over grape perhaps.

The 1958 was the only real disappointment but at least one bottle of the delicate, aristocratic 1948, the complex,

scented 1936, the sweet 1924 and the 1871 eloquently demonstrated that Rioja can be a seriously long-term wine, if carefully made.

Unfortunately, the good bottle of 1871 was drained just as I arrived, the other being a relic rather than a delight.

I was not so foolish as to miss any of the nine courses, however. Each was, in the memorable words of the sports commentator, really quite extraordinary. The translation of one course's name as "sea cucumber with endives and tomato jam" gives you a hint of the style, but the penultimate one perhaps most aptly illustrates the inventive eclecticism, almost culinary didacticism, of El Bulli's young, self-taught chef Ferran Adrià.

For Vioje a las Especies (a journey through the spices) the Savoy's white soup plates were filled with a thin, lightly set apple purée and then anointed round the edge, in the manner of clock numerals, with tiny samples of different raw spices. Some, but not all, were a pleasure to eat: pink peppercorns, saffron, mint, curry, nutmeg – and on we dutifully munched, scratched and tried to identify.

The asparagus spears wrapped in mushroom slices and arranged like a spindly wheatsheaf between a creamy parmesan sauce and a fresh mandarin jelly also veered dangerously toward exhibitionism rather than hedonism.

But, as in all of the other seven courses, every individual ingredient could not have been better quality. And such coups as the opening chicken curry ice cream in jellied consommé and the almost rudely green broad bean cappuccino with fresh mint and ham were strokes of pure genius.

Seven chefs flew themselves and their ingredients from Barcelona to London to work nine hours in the Savoy's infernal depths the day before our lunch. I am eternally grateful to them, and to myself for postponing that 3pm meeting at the last minute.

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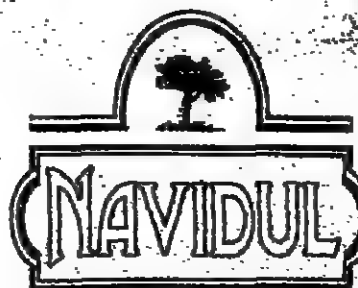
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سكزا من الأصل

PROPERTY

Surrey reveals its many treasures

Gerald Cadogan on why the county maintains its appeal

When an Englishman thinks of Surrey what does he bring to mind? Commuters and suburbs? Safe seats for Tory politicians? Soldiers training at Aldershot, Pirbright or Sandhurst? A golden age of cricketers called Bedser, Laker, Lock and May? The Surrey station in the Oxford and Cambridge boat race?

Well, yes. Most of those things. But above it was the railways which turned Surrey into one of London's most sought-after commuter zones. The car then brought bypass architecture, bijoux homes in curving avenues planted with flowering cherries, and ribbon development that might have devoured the county.

The Green Belt around London was the riposte.

In today's era of tight planning, town and village "envelopes" ensure small, local green belts. Permissible development is mainly infilling. What is left of old Surrey is probably safer than it has been all century. It still has green countryside and glorious gardens around in the home territory of Gertrude Jekyll, who designed more than 100 gardens in the county.

Behind the traffic management schemes and bland high street store fronts of Guildford, Leatherhead or Dorking lurk traces of the market towns they once were. Surrey's vernacular building style - tile cladding for the first-floor walls - crops up everywhere. It came back into fashion in the 19th century railways' building boom and still features in new homes, although now it has no purpose. Originally it protected the walls and daub infill from erosion.

Property prices have recovered from recession and the lasting attractions of Surrey are reasserting themselves. It is a pleasant place to live. And nowhere is more convenient for Heathrow, Gatwick and the Eurotunnel. Trains to London take 30-40 minutes.

A typical cottage, Knight Frank reports, costs £250,000 to £275,000, and a rectory/farmhouse £550,000 in the Guildford area to £700,000 in north Surrey. In the last quarter the market has perked up remarkably. Agents find houses quickly under offer. At the top end many buyers are from the financial sector, says Savills' Tommy de Mallet Morgan.

A pot-pourri from Surrey follows. However, remember that sales are being agreed quickly.

Good cottages are available from Curchods, Hampton and Marn, notably a thatched cottage at Bentley (Hampton) in Farnham, £199,950 and Victorian cottages at Cranleigh (Browns, £188,000) and Farnham (Mann, £240,000).

Prices for 12 houses being made from the old servants' quarters at Pyrford Court near Woking are enticing. This interesting development by Latchmere Properties in the grounds of a 19th house built by Lord Iveagh (of the Guinness family) has a Jekyll garden, which is being restored. Prices run from £145,000 to £197,500, through Curchods.

A treat in Surbiton - yes, it has treats - is 124 Maple Road, a mid-19th century town house, which is Regency in style with a double bow-front and a portico with Ionic columns. Jackson-Stops is seeking offers over £195,000.

But Surbiton is not typical of Surrey. There are also few Georgian houses. Broadbridge Farm at Burstow is a Georgian box but the upper part, in best local fashion, is clad in hanging tiles. This eccentric combination costs £450,000 from Knight Frank in Tunbridge Wells. Other Georgian houses are Ham Manor at Cobham (Savills, £750,000) and Hamme House at South Nutfield (Hamptons in Caterham, £290,000).

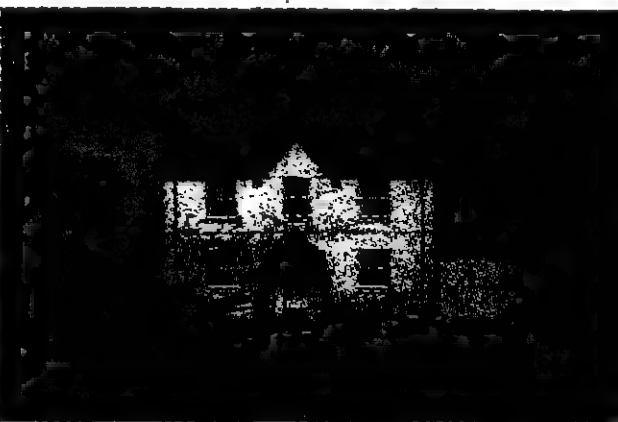
In farmhouses, Mann offers Tiffers at Charlwood for £250,000, a yeoman's house with plenty of brick and tiling. Here, as in Sussex, they are overgrown cottages. Likewise, the roofscape of Loeely at Ewhurst, which Browns is selling for £750,000, shows how the building has grown by bits and pieces. Other large cottage-farmhouses are Solars at Chiddingfold (Browns, £700,000) and the half-timbered Summers at West Horsley (Hamptons in East Horsley, £475,000).

Two Edwardian houses reflect the railways' expansion - and the revival of the local building tradition. Rooks Hill Old Farm House at Bramley costs £430,000 from KF in Guildford or Weller Eggar, and White Thorns at Haslemere, now with an indoor swimming pool, £650,000 from Lane Fox.

Finally, Pandora is a modern house in priced at £550,00 from



The roofscape of Loeely at Ewhurst, which Browns is selling for £750,000, shows how the building has grown



This Victorian cottage is on offer from Browns for £195,000



A treat in Surbiton - 124 Maple Road

Hamptons in Dorking. Browns, Cranleigh (01483-867070); Curchods, West Byfleet (01833-350111); Hampton, Caterham (01889-346233); Dorking (01306-855488); East Horsley (01483-294781); Jackson-Stops, London (0171-569 4336); Knight Frank, Guildford (01483-565171) and Tunbridge Wells (01893-515036); Lane Fox, Haslemere (01488-661077); Mann, Guildford (01483-500488); Savills, Guildford (01483-575581); Weller Eggar, Guildford (01483-575292).

Cadogan's Place Leasehold changes

Parliament has potentially good news for leaseholders. The House of Commons committee reviewing the Housing Bill has made important changes in their favour to the existing laws. But do not celebrate yet. Wait until the revised bill emerges from the House of Lords (where several freeholders are members) with none of these amendments revoked.

Provided the bill remains intact, flat-owners in mixed blocks with flats over shops or offices will qualify more easily for collective enfranchisement.

At present, if more than 10 per cent of the block is commercial, they do not qualify. A committee amendment changes this to 25 per cent. Thus, if each floor has the same area, the block need only be four floors rather than 10, which will help people in flats in low-rise 1960s shopping blocks.

Another amendment eliminates the "low" ground rent test. Those paying more than £1,000 a year should still qualify for enfranchisement.

Tenants in flats win the right to manage the common areas through a management company, which should stop unscrupulous landlords from charging disproportionate sums for "managing" these areas.

Dartmoor prison, one of the bleakest spots in the British Isles?

The answer from the brave soul who buys the church there, of St Michael and All Angels, can only be "no".

The diocese of Exeter is selling the church for £40,000 through Michelmore Hughes of Ashburton (01394-554333).

The church's story is bleak. French prisoners of war built most of it, in granite, between 1810 and 1814 - to the plan of an architect called Pulpit. Further work came from American prisoners of war, 318 of whom died (as a memorial in the church records).

It needs funds to convert this building. The diocese suggests that it could be used for housing, shops, workshops, a museum or restaurant, subject to planning approval from the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

New doors and windows in the walls of a grade II* building will probably not be allowed but roof lights, which cannot be seen from the ground outside, should be permissible.

□ □ □

Kit Martin, who resurrects the grandest British stately homes by making vertically divided houses in them, is a man of faith.

His latest scheme to come to market is the 1800-1811 Royal Naval Hospital at Great Yarmouth in Norfolk, designed by Sir Henry Pilkington and now listed grade II*.

The first occupants of the magnificent brick buildings set around a quadrangle were sailors from the Battle of Copenhagen, whom Nelson came to visit.

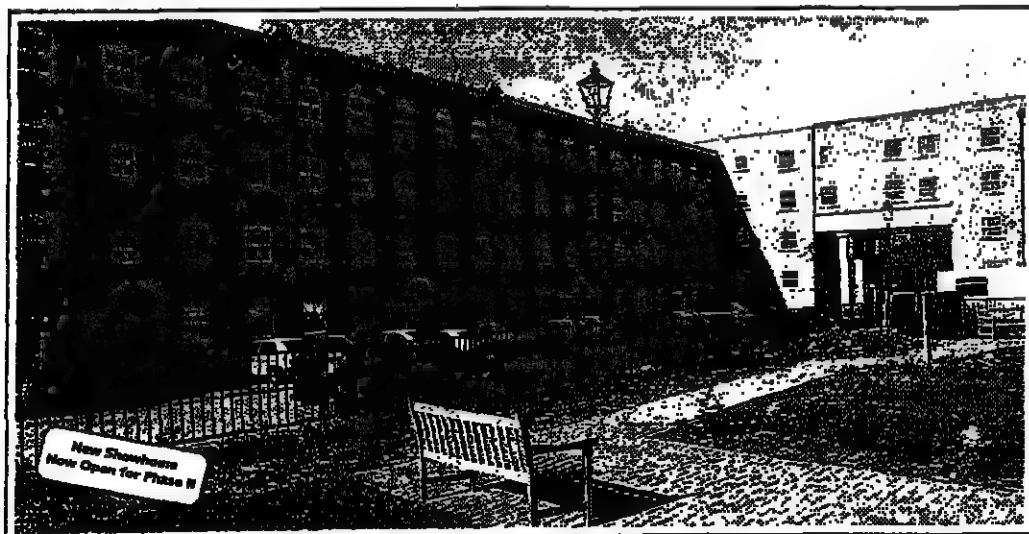
Nearly two centuries later, Martin is turning the hospital into 80 dwellings of different sizes. The first batch is now on sale, at prices from £20,000 to £85,000 through Aldreds in Great Yarmouth (01493-844881) or Strutt & Parker in Norwich (01603-617431).

□ □ □

Is it fair to call Princetown on Dartmoor, home of the

Gerald Cadogan

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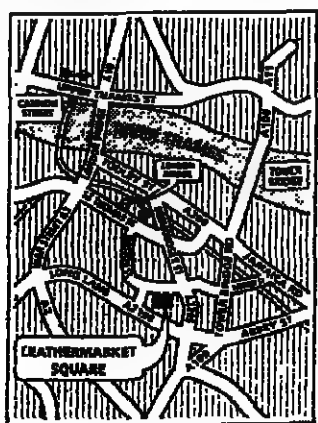


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ARTS

The Crane Kalman Gallery cannot resist, it seems, turning an exhibition, no matter how modest, into an art historical event - always beautifully researched and enthusiastically presented within the narrow scope of its small gallery allows. Always there will be something fresh and surprising on the wall, always some new story to tell. Its special field is Modern British Art, with a particular leaning towards the pre-war avant garde.

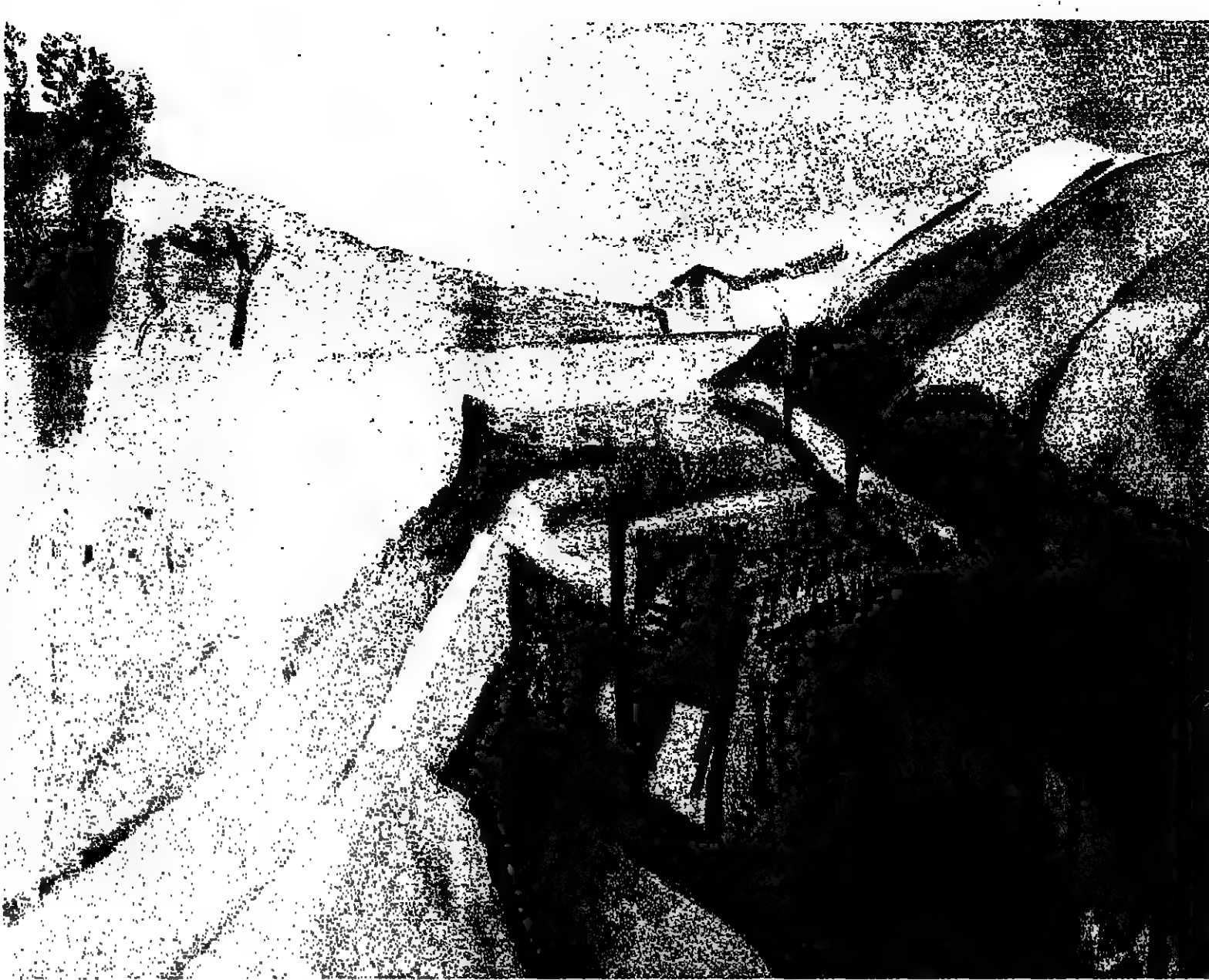
This latest show takes as its subject Ben Nicholson's relationship as an artist with his first two wives, who were themselves both artists. Winifred Roberts, grand-daughter of the 9th Earl of Carlisle, whom he married in 1920 when he was 26, was about his own age. Barbara Hepworth, whom he married in 1931 and married in 1934, some nine years his junior.

Keen on women but, as Norbert Lynton puts it in the catalogue, not much of a family man, he had two sons and a daughter by Winifred before domesticity drove him away, and triplets by Barbara - a son and two daughters - almost the minute they were married. Someone was clearly trying to make a point.

The second marriage foundered in 1951, which hurt Barbara deeply and her subsequent relations with Ben were distant at best. Winifred, however, always remained on good, even close terms with him, and a regular correspondence continued into the 1970s. But while each marriage lasted, each partner was clearly a mutual creative stimulus to the other, which is the point of this show.

Ben Nicholson's standing as an artist hardly needs rehearsal here. As for Barbara Hepworth, she went on to establish an independent international reputation to match, at the very least, that of her former husband. Winifred, by contrast, has always remained a comparatively minor figure - her reputation more one of association - though she does have a loyal coterie of followers persuaded as much by her Christian Scientist principles as by the actual quality of her work. The true story, so this show suggests, is not quite as simple as all that.

For Ben Nicholson, by conventional assessment the more serious and substantial artist of the three, is shown by every fresh examination of his work to have been one who needed constantly to feed off the originality of others in order to supply his own. The debt he owed his father, William, for exam-



'Corbaccio', 1923, by Ben Nicholson. Winifred Nicholson influenced his figurative work and Barbara Hepworth his purity of form.

Marriage of three talents

William Packer on the work of Ben Nicholson and his wives Winifred and Barbara Hepworth

ple, has yet to be fully totted up. He consciously set himself to escape that paternal influence by his mannered, decorative, faux-naïf simplicity of the 1920s. Yet the father's clarity of vision and pictorial discipline, his subtle yet incisive line and delicacy of touch, are manifest in everything the son ever did.

But that is for another exhibition to explore. Here the point is that again, with his creative antennae ever finely tuned to which current developments might be of immedi-

ate use to him, Ben took from those closest to him at least as much as he ever gave. Braque in Paris in the 1920s, with his decorative softening of late-Cubist still life: Christopher Wood in England and Brittany with his sophisticated directness and naivety; yes, of course he would pick up on what was going on elsewhere. By how much more, then, would he notice what his wives were doing.

From Barbara, in the early 1930s, he got the purity of form that would lead him, albeit

selectively, from an increasingly abstracted figuration into pure abstraction. But it was she, whatever he or Henry Moore might have said, who had had the radical nerve to get there first, and here was always to remain the firmer commitment. Winifred's influence upon him through the previous decade was less obvious and direct, though the evidence here is that it was no less real. In his figurative aspect, to her too, he was to remain ever in debt.

Her work of the 1920s is her

best. There is to it an unforced painterliness and delicacy of touch, and an unconscious charm in her disposition of her subject that, in following her, Ben would only make sharper and more knowing. With Ben there is always an exquisite edge and precision to the work; with Winifred always a celebration.

Here we find them setting up their pots and flowers on the shelf or window-sill - enduring subjects for both of them. And where Ben's is a close-toned orchestration of greys and

browns, Winifred's, no less subtle, is a burst of leaves and blooms. The boats ride in the harbour at St Ives, black and white upon blue and ochre, so softly drawn, so sure of composition, so freshly painted, and it is not Ben's but Winifred's, and as good as anything. She is, for once, in her quiet way, the star of the show.

Ben Nicholson and two wives: Crane Kalman Gallery, 178 Brompton Road SW3, until May 4.

Culture from Copenhagen

Richard Fairman finds the Danes trumpeting their music across Europe

No other city has prepared for its year as cultural capital of Europe with a bigger fanfare. With no expense spared Copenhagen sent its opera and ballet companies on tour last autumn, starting in London and then doubling the publicity with a last-minute cancellation in Paris in protest at France's nuclear tests in the South Pacific.

Now the year has arrived and Copenhagen is having to live up to the expectations that have been raised. Within the city the prestige of being cultural capital is seen as giving the arts a more influential place on the political agenda. The Royal Danish Opera will be presenting more new productions than at any time before, arguing that being cultural capital is such a high profile occasion that the money simply has to be found, and having set this benchmark, the company is hoping that similar funds will be forthcoming in future years as well.

Another side benefit is that arts organisations within the city have been brought together in collaboration. This autumn the Royal Danish Opera has invited in the period-instrument Concerto Copenhagen, directed by Reinhard Goebel, to play for its production of Handel's *Xerxes*. A month later it takes the premiere of a new opera, *Dommen* by Niels Rosing-Schow, out to the performance theatre in the newly-built Museum for Modern Art.

It has become one of the aims of the cultural capital programmes to ensure that some tangible monument remains when the year itself is over. In Copenhagen, the Museum for Modern Art will hold that honour: a major new public building designed for architectural prestige, much in line with the kind of projects that the Millennium Commission is pursuing in Britain. Its striking, boat-like hull, beached to the south of the city, is already the photo most often seen to sum up the cultural year.

The musical monument destined to last beyond the end of 1996 is the Copenhagen Singing Competition "in memoriam Lauritz Melchior", and The Danes have decided to remind the world how successful a nation of opera-singers they have been by inaugurating their own singing award. It will be run jointly by Danmarks Radio (the Danish Broadcasting Corporation) and the Royal Theatre.

The initial plan was to make it a competition for Heltenors only (a heroic line in which the Vikings have been particularly strong) but to widen the appeal entrance has sensibly been thrown open. Singers from 19 countries will take part (May 25 to June 1), and their presence will help underline the international aspirations for music in Copenhagen, which has sometimes seemed insular in the past. There are various reasons why the music of Denmark's

greatest composer - Carl Nielsen - has not travelled as widely as it should. One is the poor state of the performance material and so the government has allocated Dkr4.5m over three years for the first stage of a nine-year project to publish a complete Carl Nielsen Edition. The editor-in-chief, Niels Martin Jensen, hopes that the availability of newly-corrected scores and instrumental parts will encourage more performances.

The other problem is the language. It is not every opera company that is prepared to send its singers off for a six-month course in Danish, as the Sarasota Opera in Florida did before it put on *Maskerade* last year. Still, Nielsen's operas have begun to make more headway. Decca is due to make a new recording of *Maskerade* with the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, using the new edition, in the summer; and the Royal Danish Opera has chosen the opera for the first new production of its action-packed 1996/7 season in August.

In the meantime the company has also brought back Nielsen's other opera - *Saul og David*, a still greater rarity. Opera-lovers outside Denmark generally know it from recordings or not at all. (In Britain, there was a concert performance only at the Barbican, a highlight of the big Scandinavian festival a few years back.) The Danish production settled for a semi-abstract style with medieval trappings - an obvious way to treat the opera, though not the most imaginative. It looked and felt staid, like Bayreuth productions in the era after Wieland Wagner, when modernism had become a duty rather than a necessity. In fact, Wagner seems to have been the dramatic model (though not the musical) in Nielsen's mind. Saul's visit to consult the Witch of Endor is clearly a re-living of Wotan's meeting with Erda in *Sigfried*, and nearly as imposing in this performance.

The fine orchestra of the Royal Danish Opera, conducted by Poul Jorgensen, has this music coursing through its veins. Nielsen's score may be emotionally detached in a cool Scandinavian way, but when its energy starts to well up from below, the music can build into an irresistible tidal wave. There is nothing better than seeing a company in its own theatre performing one of its national operas. This performance had strengths in both the chorus and soloists. Asaga Haugland made Saul the outstanding personality, as the role demands. Majken Bjerno sang Mikal, Saul's daughter, with confidence and Kurt West as David, lyre in hand, looked and sounded like a budding Tannhäuser. An unexpected extra was a surprise towards foreign visitors happily in the spirit of the "cultural capital" year.

Whose voice is it lamenting that England, "so rich in tradition and achievement, should betray itself and what it stood for by so wholeheartedly submitting to foolish government, natural laziness, woolly thinking and... the new religion of mediocrity"? Pretty accurate stuff, you might think. Even more so when the same voice deplores the tabloid whonapping descent on those private peccadilloes of the great acknowledged "since the beginning of recorded time... never before so vulgarly publicised". Noel Coward, you should be living now. Or rather not. If the 1930s were such a source of

grief and contempt, your disbeliever in God knows what you make of Britain now.

Recent books have given glimpses of Coward the nazi-dropper, social-climber and philistine, even the bully. But *Noel Coward - from His Diaries*, edited and introduced by Tony Stavacre on Radio 4, selects the jewels and makes compulsive listening. Last week's opener was shot through with melancholy,

especially in the terrible conviction that the young Battle of Britain pilots had died for nothing since the values they defended have vanished. Next week's cheerier selection takes in his late blossoming as a cabaret star in America, the centre of a crowd that included names like Sinatra, Garland and Goldwyn, but manages to avoid Luvviness.

Coward had a gift for the sudden sharp image and the

sudden, haunting perception, as when noting the stoic English seaside and "children advancing manure with cold into the cheerless waves", or the wonderment at Churchill's emotional immaturity - the great man "has lived less than I". The world evoked by these diaries seems ancient, historic. This has nothing to do with chronology, everything to do with the attitude of the speaker. The late Simon Cadell does a fine job: no imitation, but the right cadences, weight and precision, the man is conjured up.

More reminiscences, overlapping with Coward's, seemed infinitely more up to date, and not merely because their protagonist is sparkily alive. At 88 Sir Frank Roberts is the *Key Witness* of another new series (it follows Coward immediately on Wednesday evening). He seems to have been present at most momentous occasions and to have known the century's most famous, and infamous,

figures. He joined the Foreign Office in 1930 and eight years later passed Neville Chamberlain the note confirming his meeting with Hitler - the future Munich agreement. Stalin flattered him by calling him "our enemy" and accusing him of being in British Intelligence (Stalin admired our Intelligence). He told Goering he had missed the bus when the Marshal rang up to ask unofficially if the war could be stopped. He broke the news of Sikorski's death to Churchill and watched the PM cry. He knew de Gaulle in exile, was at Yalta... Totally riveting, not least when defending Chamberlain ("he was very tough and knew his own mind... The Mrs Thatcher of his day") - but for that time in next week.

So-called ordinary people can be fascinating. Up to a point. A new series, *Relatively Speaking*, places close relations together and lights the blue touch paper. Actually, the first

was so mild as to be dull. Jo Brand, the often funny, often rude and frequently aggressive comedian, talked to her mother. "You were a really traditional little girl who liked all the little girl things," said Joyce Brand with a distinct note of wistfulness. Mrs B sounds a good egg, standing by her daughter, not least when Jo had burnt down her flat and possessions and lost her job within 24 hours. The amiable programme seemed longer than it was. Perhaps the subjects should be world famous or not famous at all. Either write *Private Lives* and play Las Vegas or hand a portentous note to the PM.

Or, of course, drop dead in a soap opera. Guy Pemberton has gone at last; his inauspiciously benevolent will never get my fillings again. Is it too much to hope that Caroline will be found guilty of poisoning him with one of Phil's recipes? Meanwhile Radio 4 contributed wonderfully to the national sense of occasion when last Monday's lunchtime repeat of *The Archers*, the first episode since the death, was cut off through technical difficulties causing dyspepsia through the script's use. How Coward would have laughed.

Radio/Martin Hoyle

Memories of things past

Musical/Antony Thornecroft

For Elvis fans only

Why is it that Elvis Presley, the indispensible first cause of rock and roll, of pop music, of youth culture, of modern society, is so deeply unfashionable? If only he had died in his trim 20s rather than in his grotesque 40s he would have the respect and affection of all. But nothing can erase the pitiful movies, the sad Las Vegas years, the reclusive binges in Graceland: it was a great American tragedy.

And nothing of this fascinating morality tale disturbs the facile flow of *Elvis - The Musical*. This is one for the besotted fans, but I doubt that there are enough of them to support a show which first disturbed the public in 1977. The impression is that, like some old gramophone, for almost two decades it has been slowly winding down around the country, playing smaller and smaller

venues when suddenly, to fill a space, it re-emerges in the West End. The formula is so predictable, a template of countless musical biogs of recent years: a concert of Elvis songs, with some minimal information about the life provided by back projections of old films and slides. It is as about as illuminating as a rear light. With little to catch the eye the attention tends to wander. There is plenty to muse on.

There is the gritty determination with which the backing band seize their brief acting careers, gagging like mad, like children in a nativity play. There is the sad trick of fate that doomed Tim Whittall, who played Young Elvis in 1977, to grow quite un-Elvis Presley in the intervening years, so that his performance as Middle Period Elvis is quite disconcerting. There is P.J. Proby, who seems to have spent more time being Elvis

than Elvis, struggling with a wig, the lyrics, and a vocal delivery better suited to the parade ground, as once again he takes a stab at the later years. There are the girl dancers, miming the routines of their pantomime years.

The saddest criticism came from the audience which was too battered and apathetic to seize its cue. In the quite rousing finale it was scheduled to take to the aisles and boogie. Instead it sat like inmates of a nursing home, passively experiencing a visiting entertainment. *Elvis - The Musical* is basically pointless. Its pleasures are the memories of the rough energy of early Elvis: "Don't be cruel", "Mystery Train", "My baby left me" appealingly put over by Young Elvis (Alexander Bar). Like the man himself, the production cannot escape a long decline to the grave.

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BOOKS

A spiritual legacy from disbelief to cultism

Ian McEwan on a tumultuous century of family life in the US

That grand 19th-century ambition to make of the novel a version of society, hierarchic and flawed but teeming all-inclusive, has never quite faded from the American literary dream despite the anti-democratic instincts of modernism and the fact that American everyday life itself, in its overwhelming extravagance of event and racial contradiction, appears to outstrip literary invention and defy synthesis. Two novelists above all, Saul Bellow and John Updike, have risen to the task of encompassing this, the American century, and perhaps it is some measure of their success that they have been attacked so bitterly by those who have felt excluded from, or misrepresented by, their accounts. Both writers have embraced, however ambivalently, privately wrought religions of fine distinctions, and both have looked for their country's spiritual condition in the ruin of its cities and in the seductions and assaults of mass culture;

IN THE BEAUTY OF THE LILIES
by John Updike

Hamish Hamilton £16, 512 pages

and in both men, disappointment is tempered - or enlivened - by celebration.

In *The Beauty of the Lilies* submits expansively to this pattern. It covers four generations in four long chapters, each of which ends with a stark two word formulation, the very last of which is - "The children" - a parting reminder that this is a novel about legacy, spiritual legacy. These children - "too many to count" - are being led by their mothers from the flames that are destroying the besieged Waco-like headquarters of a religious cult.

Grotesquely excessive belief closes a novel that opens, 80 years before, in 1910, when an intellectually fastidious Presbyterian preacher, Clarence Wilmot, loses his faith and bequeaths the consequences to his son, Teddy, his granddaughter, Essie and finally his great grandson, Clark whose aimless existence takes on purpose once he signs up with the apocalyptic adventists.

When Clarence announces his decision to leave the church he is called to justify himself before one Mr. Dreaver, a mandarin of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy. The theological discussion, as impacted as the postulates of quantum mechanics, brings us close to Updike's own religion, at least as expressed in his book *Self-Consciousness*. It represents the furthest reaches faith and rational materialism can penetrate together before parting company - very low church indeed. But even - or perhaps, especially - a religious

as reasonable as this cannot withstand Clarence's readings of Nietzsche, Darwin and other scientists, or the church's automatic support for the free market and the mill owners against the strikers. Clarence resists Dreaver's sophisticated entreaties, the living is lost, the family takes a downward lurch socially, and at this point, sonata-like, the novel's second subject is elaborated.

For as Clarence's second career as an encyclopaedia salesman descends to grinding failure, he begins to seek afternoon sanctuary in a new kind of church - the silent-movie houses where, in "a trance as infallible as opium" he finds solace in another life that can never be his own. From here on in, mass culture as represented by the dream industry of Hollywood films is offered as religion's substitute, and frequently described in its terms. Nourishment is not to be had, of course - "watching the movies took no strength, but recovering from them did." And each afternoon Clarence faces the harsh return from this "scintillating bath" back into "the bleak facts of life, his life gutted by God's withdrawal." The baton of unbelief and narrative attention passes to Clarence's youngest son, Teddy, who finds no agony in God's absence and who survives by dint of low ambition and steady heart to become the novel's presiding spirit, alive as an old man on the last page to see the TV reports of the siege in which his grandson - in a last minute access of skepticism - sets free the women and children and dies for his pains.

As Teddy grows up, marries a local girl with a malformed foot and becomes the town's postman, world events rumble and thunder off-stage, and Clarence finally acquires a voice and later, welcomes Teddy's only child, Essie, who becomes the star of the novel's third section and of Hollywood's golden age. She in turn spawns a fourth chapter, Clarke, a child whom she neglects for a sequence of husbands and dedicated worship at celebrity's shrine. The poor rootless boy matures into an unsuccessful movie producer, troubled by a need for answers neither his grandfather nor his CIA uncle can quite satisfy.

Certainty of a crazed kind comes at last in the cult leader, Jesse, who is obsessed by sex, guns and Revelation, and who preaches faith in its blindest, wildest, least Updikean form. In *The Beauty of the Lilies* is the most readable and enjoyable Updike since the last in the tetralogy, *Rabbit at Rest*. It is a lovely achievement in its leisure and sprawl. Indeed, a certain authorial *droit de seigneur* appears to be exercised here in the relentless and sometimes cloying accumulation of detail, in the occasional cliché, in moments of emotional incontinence and in a long reconstruction of the world from a child's point of view when a Joycean handful of pages would have sufficed, and in the second half of the novel especially, magisterial details and idiosyncrasies of gesture and speech; a fascination for the intricacies of the daily work that people do, unrivalled in a major writer since Kipling; and finally, that delightfully cool intelligence at the service of a high seriousness.

What is new in this autumnal, apparently post-erotic Updike is a certain emotional unbuttoning that leads him to a few excesses, but also permits moments of quite piercing tenderness. Teddy surprises his lame wife Emily in the nursery as she bends over the crib of their new born child, Essie - "her two hands were rapturously clutched around her daughter's bare feet - those tiny, round-soled, puffy-backed, violet-tinted feet, feet just unfolded from the bud..." By her eyes alone Emily communicates first guilty surprise, then "a watery plea that he ignore in her worship the something shameful." "She's perfect," she said apologetically. "So are you," he lied. "He takes her in his arms, but we are told, Teddy will never stop remembering her 'plaintively crouched over the baby like that. Such pain.'" Thus another

scale to the strengths. And the strengths here are all the usual ones: felicities of phrasing and observation littering almost every page; the intellectual omnivore's research seamlessly assumed into the narrative; the unquesnished, unscrupulous attention to personal details and idiosyncrasies of gesture and speech; a fascination for the intricacies of the daily work that people do, unrivalled in a major writer since Kipling; and finally, that delightfully cool intelligence at the service of a high seriousness.

Two word coda brings a section to its close, and what has rescued the moment from sentimentality is the finely judged acknowledgement of Teddy's lie.

This novel describes much pain in fact, both in the private and public domains. Such happiness as there is for his four central characters is fleeting, but never quite accidental, for the legacy of belief, or indifference to belief, shapes their capacity for frustration or fulfillment; they are helpless before their fates but responsible for them too. Against the foreground of this irresolvable contradiction of the private life, Updike's tumultuous American century is brilliantly revealed.

An Asia of many parts

I was once chatting with one of Singapore's few opposition MPs in the lobby of a local hotel. The politician was attacking the notion of Asian values - the idea that there is some form of uniform value system linking all the diverse peoples of Asia which in turn accounts for the region's recent economic success.

"Take sex for instance" he said. "The Singapore government likes to say that Asians, in contrast to people in the west, are conservative about sexual matters. Yet look at Japan. It is the only country I know that has invented used-knicker vending machines."

Ian Buruma has taken a wide ranging look at Asians and their values. He is also something of an expert on Japanese and sex: he points out this can be decidedly kinky, with a heavy helping of cruelty and violence. Buruma also has a great deal of knowledge on other matters - from Bengali literature to Nazi film making to Korean architecture.

His observations are sharp and often amusing. But this collection of pieces is rather jumbled and disconnected. To the best of my knowledge Buruma is in good health. Yet this reads like some posthumous compendium hurriedly pushed together by a publisher intent on earning a few bob while the body is still warm.

We swing from the works of the wonderfully named Japanese novelist Yoshimoto Banana to Buruma's thoughts on Wilfred Thesiger and Baden Powell. Baden Powell loved acting in drag and watching soldiers "trooping in to be washed in nature's gurb, with their strong well built naked wonderfully made bodies."

Meanwhile we are told that Thesiger was a dab hand at circumcisions, a service he performed with considerable relish during his time with the Marsh Arabs of Iraq. Interesting stuff, but I did begin to wonder where it was all going. Taken singly, many of these essays are superb. There is a fulsome description of the Philippines and the showbiz and cruelty that made up the Marcos regime. Imelda Marcos went off into exile singing Irving Berlin songs and feeling betrayed by the US. "It was sincere and deeply humiliating, in the way that squabbles over money in a whorehouse are humiliating. Mrs Marcos's tears were like the tears of a hooker who feels she has not been paid enough for her services."

Buruma cuts through much of the tosh that is talked about Hong Kong and its future. There is a view, prevalent in the higher echelons of the business community, that little will change next year when a giant effigy of Chris Patten is fired across the harbour and China's geriatric leaders stumble ashore to reclaim their own.

Buruma says such a vision of the future ignores the past. "Virtually throughout its history the rulers of China did everything in their power to deny their cities precisely what Hong Kong has been promised. No amount of kowtowing to Beijing by big business will save the day. The traditional instinct of China's leaders is not to let the flowers of business bloom by encouraging the free pursuit of riches, but to control and to squeeze."

Buruma describes Singapore as the nanny state of Asia. The idea of Asian values, which includes respect for authority and the rights of the community above those of the individual, is used by its leaders to endorse their particular brand of authoritarianism. "We decide what's right" says Lee Kuan Yew. "Never mind what the people think."

Thank goodness that many Asians refuse to take part in this cultural mythology. Buruma tells a delightful story about a group of Indonesian dignitaries who flew from Jakarta to see their fellow countrymen in Iran Jaya. The visitors were dismayed to be greeted by tribesmen dressed in little but their erect and elongated penis sheaths.

"They were told to dress in future like respectable Indonesians. But the Papuans were not so easily cowed. The next time a government representative arrived in Jayapura (the Iranian capital) he was greeted by a line of half naked men who showed their patriotism by flying little Indonesian flags from their sheaths."

Kieran Cooke



When we speak about new technology, we forget how new the old technologies still are. This intriguing collection is a series of attempts at remembering, the better to understand how our perceptions are shaped by our own inventions.

High-tech leads to higher-tech

Babbage's dream: finally built as a gleaming assembly of brass rods and gearwheels at the Science Museum in London in the 1990s - a Victorian machine which no Victorian ever saw.

This extraordinary history, in which Babbage's machine becomes descendant as well as forerunner of the modern digital computer, is used to open up a series of questions about imagination and technology. Why do some artefacts get built, not others? Why do some become powerful cultural symbols, while others turn into

taken-for-granted tools? It would sound otiose now to ponder the social significance of the fax machine, but who would be without it?

The Victorians were as pre-occupied with technological novelties as we are. The automata which so fascinated Babbage were already showing how ready people were to credit machines with intelligence. Simon Schaffer argues this was because the human intelligence which is actually built into the machine is invisible to spectators.

At the same time, technology was redefining what was visible, what invisible. Other, fully realised, technologies were attracting the Victorian gaze, as the visual world began to be transformed into something approaching its modern aspect. Microscopes adorned middle-class homes, photography began to fix the moment as a reproducible likeness, glass itself, only now made well enough to be a truly invisible barrier, altered cultural perception irrevocably.

Scarcely were these assimilated than a new wave of innovations broke, Edison's phonograph, the telephone, radio broadcasts. A voice no longer implied the presence of a speaker. Virtual realities of the ear were added to those of the eye. As Gillian Beer's essay beautifully describes, "vagrant sound", which once implied magic, is now constantly accessible. There is a continual

global babble, which we switch in and out of at will. Beer also shows how radio formed new audiences, addressed in new ways, and became a technology which illustrated a new culture at the same time as advancing it. The new medium was eagerly taken up by popularisers of the new physics of the 1920s.

Or consider the Internet.

CULTURAL BABBLE: TECHNOLOGY, TIME AND INVENTION
edited by Francis Spufford and Jenny Uglow
Faber £15.99, 313 pages

John Katz's essay stands out from most of the others as an attempt at cultural appropriation rather than a commentary on how it has already happened. For him, the new world spun from the electronic web is above all an opportunity to recover Tom Paine's vision of global communication between free and equal citizens. He imagines Paine as a citizen of the cyberculture, intervening in everyone else's debates with the ease of a keyboard and the speed of electronic mail.

It is a beguiling picture. Maybe the Net, first built to afford the American military secure communications in the face of nuclear attack, really can become the bloodstream of a renewed democratic culture. But if the diverse pieces here allow any general conclusion, it is that the uses of cyberspace, metaphorical and otherwise, will be as varied as only people can make them. And they will change the people involved in the never-ending process of adaptation and assimilation. As ever, some of us create the technology. Then we all use the technology to create ourselves.

Jon Turney

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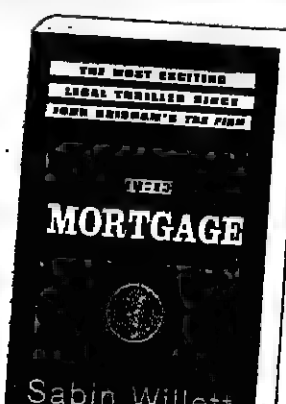
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MANDARIN A MANDARIN PAPERBACK ORIGINAL

ARTS

The Crane Kalman Gallery cannot resist, it seems, turning an exhibition, no matter how modest, into an art historical event - always beautifully researched and enthusiastically presented within the narrow scope of its small gallery allows. Always there will be something fresh and surprising on the wall, always some new story to tell. Its special field is Modern British Art, with a particular leaning towards the pre-war avant garde.

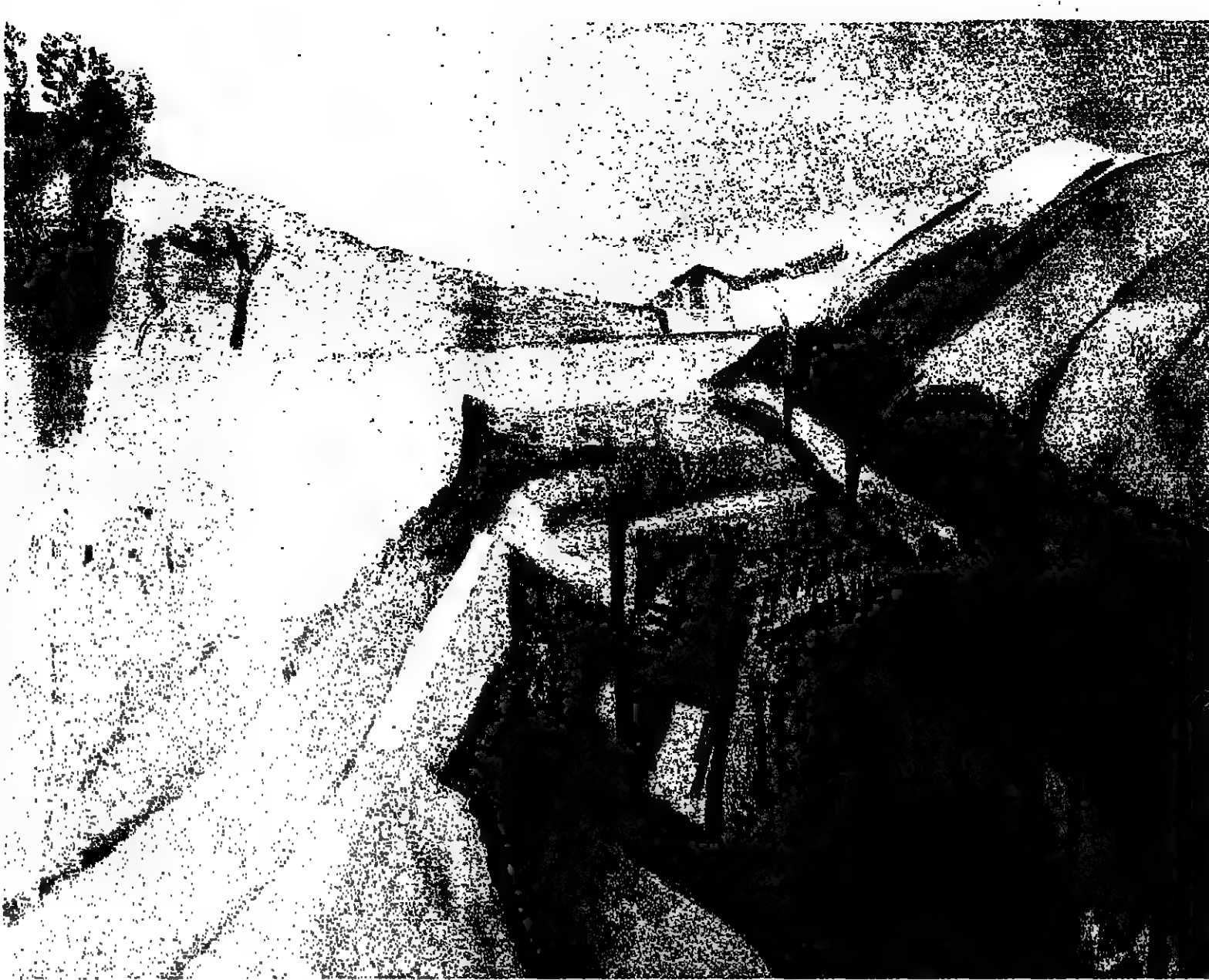
This latest show takes as its subject Ben Nicholson's relationship as an artist with his first two wives, who were themselves both artists. Winifred Roberts, grand-daughter of the 9th Earl of Carlisle, whom he married in 1920 when he was 26, was about his own age. Barbara Hepworth, whom he married in 1931 and married in 1934, some nine years his junior.

Keen on women but, as Norbert Lynton puts it in the catalogue, not much of a family man, he had two sons and a daughter by Winifred before domesticity drove him away, and triplets by Barbara - a son and two daughters - almost the minute they were married. Someone was clearly trying to make a point.

The second marriage foundered in 1951, which hurt Barbara deeply and her subsequent relations with Ben were distant at best. Winifred, however, always remained on good, even close terms with him, and a regular correspondence continued into the 1970s. But while each marriage lasted, each partner was clearly a mutual creative stimulus to the other, which is the point of this show.

Ben Nicholson's standing as an artist hardly needs rehearsal here. As for Barbara Hepworth, she went on to establish an independent international reputation to match, at the very least, that of her former husband. Winifred, by contrast, has always remained a comparatively minor figure - her reputation more one of association - though she does have a loyal coterie of followers persuaded as much by her Christian Scientist principles as by the actual quality of her work. The true story, so this show suggests, is not quite as simple as all that.

For Ben Nicholson, by conventional assessment the more serious and substantial artist of the three, is shown by every fresh examination of his work to have been one who needed constantly to feed off the originality of others in order to supply his own. The debt he owed his father, William, for exam-



'Corbiello', 1923, by Ben Nicholson. Winifred Nicholson influenced his figurative work and Barbara Hepworth his purity of form.

Marriage of three talents

William Packer on the work of Ben Nicholson and his wives Winifred and Barbara Hepworth

ple, has yet to be fully totted up. He consciously set himself to escape that paternal influence by his mannered, decorative, faux-naïf simplicity of the 1920s. Yet the father's clarity of vision and pictorial discipline, his subtle yet incisive line and delicacy of touch, are manifest in everything the son ever did.

But that is for another exhibition to explore. Here the point is that again, with his creative antennae ever finely tuned to which current developments might be of immedi-

ate use to him, Ben took from those closest to him at least as much as he ever gave. Braque in Paris in the 1920s, with his decorative softening of late-Cubist still life; Christopher Wood in England and Brittany with his sophisticated directness and naivety; yes, of course he would pick up on what was going on elsewhere. By how much more, then, would he notice what his wives were doing.

From Barbara, in the early 1930s, he got the purity of form that would lead him, albeit

selectively, from an increasingly abstracted figuration into pure abstraction. But it was she, whatever he or Henry Moore might have said, who had had the radical nerve to get there first, and here was always to remain the firmer commitment. Winifred's influence upon him through the previous decade was less obvious and direct, though the evidence here is that it was no less real. In his figurative aspect, to her too, he was to remain ever in debt.

Her work of the 1920s is her

best. There is to it an unforced painterliness and delicacy of touch, and an unconscious charm in her disposition of her subject that, in following her, Ben would only make sharper and more knowing. With Ben there is always an exquisite edge and precision to the work; with Winifred always a celebration.

Here we find them setting up their pots and flowers on the shelf or window-sill - enduring subjects for both of them. And where Ben's is a close-toned orchestration of greys and

browns, Winifred's, no less subtle, is a burst of leaves and blooms. The boats ride in the harbour at St Ives, black and white upon blue and ochre, so softly drawn, so sure of composition, so freshly painted, and it is not Ben's but Winifred's, and as good as anything. She is, for once, in her quiet way, the star of the show.

Ben Nicholson and two wives: Crane Kalman Gallery, 178 Brompton Road SW3, until May 4.

Culture from Copenhagen

Richard Fairman finds the Danes trumpeting their music across Europe

No other city has prepared for its year as cultural capital of Europe with a bigger fanfare. With no expense spared Copenhagen sent its opera and ballet companies on tour last autumn, starting in London and then doubling the publicity with a last-minute cancellation in Paris in protest at France's nuclear tests in the South Pacific.

Now the year has arrived and Copenhagen is having to live up to the expectations that have been raised. Within the city the prestige of being cultural capital is seen as giving the arts a more influential place on the political agenda. The Royal Danish Opera will be presenting more new productions than at any time before, arguing that being cultural capital is such a high profile occasion that the money simply has to be found, and having set this benchmark, the company is hoping that similar funds will be forthcoming in future years as well.

Another side benefit is that arts organisations within the city have been brought together in collaboration. This autumn the Royal Danish Opera has invited in the period-instrument Concerto Copenhagen, directed by Reinhard Goebel, to play for its production of Handel's *Xerxes*. A month later it takes the premiere of a new opera, *Dommen* by Niels Rosing-Schow, out to the performance theatre in the newly-built Museum for Modern Art.

It has become one of the aims of the cultural capital programmes to ensure that some tangible monument remains when the year itself is over. In Copenhagen, the Museum for Modern Art will hold that honour: a major new public building designed for architectural prestige, much in line with the kind of projects that the Millennium Commission is pursuing in Britain. Its striking, boat-like hull, beached to the south of the city, is already the photo most often seen to sum up the cultural year.

The musical monument destined to last beyond the end of 1996 is the Copenhagen Singing Competition "in memoriam Lauritz Melchior", and The Danes have decided to remind the world how successful a nation of opera-singers they have been by inaugurating their own singing award. It will be run jointly by Danmarks Radio (the Danish Broadcasting Corporation) and the Royal Theatre.

The initial plan was to make it a competition for Heltenors only (a heroic line in which the Vikings have been particularly strong) but to widen the appeal entrance has sensibly been thrown open. Singers from 19 countries will take part (May 25 to June 1), and their presence will help underline the international aspirations for music in Copenhagen, which has sometimes seemed insular in the past. There are various reasons why the music of Denmark's

greatest composer - Carl Nielsen - has not travelled as widely as it should. One is the poor state of the performance material and so the government has allocated Dkr4.5m over three years for the first stage of a nine-year project to publish a complete Carl Nielsen Edition. The editor-in-chief, Niels Martin Jensen, hopes that the availability of newly-corrected scores and instrumental parts will encourage more performances.

The other problem is the language. It is not every opera company that is prepared to send its singers off for a six-month course in Danish, as the Sarasota Opera in Florida did before it put on *Maskerade* last year. Still, Nielsen's operas have begun to make more headway. Decca is due to make a new recording of *Maskerade* with the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, using the new edition, in the summer; and the Royal Danish Opera has chosen the opera for the first new production of its action-packed 1996/7 season in August.

In the meantime the company has also brought back Nielsen's other opera - *Saul og David*, a still greater rarity. Opera-lovers outside Denmark generally know it from recordings or not at all. (In Britain, there was a concert performance only at the Barbican, a highlight of the big Scandinavian festival a few years back.) The Danish production settled for a semi-abstract style with medieval trappings - an obvious way to treat the opera, though not the most imaginative. It looked and felt staid, like Bayreuth productions in the era after Wieland Wagner, when modernism had become a duty rather than a necessity. In fact, Wagner seems to have been the dramatic model (though not the musical) in Nielsen's mind. Saul's visit to consult the Witch of Endor is clearly a re-living of Wotan's meeting with Erda in *Sigfried*, and nearly as imposing in this performance.

The fine orchestra of the Royal Danish Opera, conducted by Poul Jorgensen, has this music coursing through its veins. Nielsen's score may be emotionally detached in a cool Scandinavian way, but when its energy starts to well up from below, the music can build into an irresistible tidal wave. There is nothing better than seeing a company in its own theatre performing one of its national operas. This performance had strengths in both the chorus and soloists. Asaga Haugland made Saul the outstanding personality, as the role demands. Majken Bjerno sang Mikal, Saul's daughter, with confidence and Kurt West as David, lyre in hand, looked and sounded like a budding Tannhäuser. An unexpected extra was a welcome nod towards foreign visitors happily in the spirit of the "cultural capital" year.

Whose voice is it lamenting that England, "so rich in tradition and achievement, should betray itself and what it stood for by so wholeheartedly submitting to foolish government, natural laziness, woolly thinking and... the new religion of mediocrity"? Pretty accurate stuff, you might think. Even more so when the same voice deplores the tabloid whonapping descent on those private peccadilloes of the great acknowledged "since the beginning of recorded time... never before so vulgarly publicised". Noel Coward, you should be living now. Or rather not. If the 1930s were such a source of

grief and contempt, your disbeliever in God knows what you make of Britain now.

Recent books have given glimpses of Coward the nazi-dropper, social-climber and philistine, even the bully. But *Noel Coward - from His Diaries*, edited and introduced by Tony Stavacre on Radio 4, selects the jewels and makes compulsive listening. Last week's opener was shot through with melancholy,

especially in the terrible conviction that the young Battle of Britain pilots had died for nothing since the values they defended have vanished. Next week's cheerier selection takes in his late blossoming as a cabaret star in America, the centre of a crowd that included names like Sinatra, Garland and Goldwyn, but manages to avoid Luvviness.

Coward had a gift for the sudden sharp image and the

sudden, haunting perception, as when noting the stoic English seaside and "children advancing manure with cold into the cheerless waves", or the wonderment at Churchill's emotional immaturity - the great man "has lived less than I". The world evoked by these diaries seems ancient, historic. This has nothing to do with chronology, everything to do with the attitude of the speaker. The late Simon Cadell does a fine job: no imitation, but the right cadences, weight and precision, the man is captured.

More reminiscences, overlapping with Coward's, seemed infinitely more up to date, and not merely because their protagonist is sparkily alive. At 88 Sir Frank Roberts is the *Key Witness* of another new series (it follows Coward immediately on Wednesday evening). He seems to have been present at most momentous occasions and to have known the century's most famous, and infamous,

figures. He joined the Foreign Office in 1930 and eight years later passed Neville Chamberlain the note confirming his meeting with Hitler - the future Munich agreement. Stalin flattered him by calling him "our enemy" and accusing him of being in British Intelligence (Stalin admired our intelligence). He told Goering he had missed the bus when the Marshal rang up to ask unofficially if the war could be stopped. He broke the news of Sikorski's death to Churchill and watched the PM cry. He knew de Gaulle in exile, was at Yalta... Totally riveting, not least when defending Chamberlain ("he was very tough and knew his own mind... The Mrs Thatcher of his day") - but for that time in next week.

So-called ordinary people can be fascinating. Up to a point. A new series, *Relatively Speaking*, places close relations together and lights the blue touch paper. Actually, the first

was so mild as to be dull. Jo Brand, the often funny, often rude and frequently aggressive comedian, talked to her mother. "You were a really traditional little girl who liked all the little girl things," said Joyce Brand with a distinct note of wistfulness. Mrs B sounds a good egg, standing by her daughter, not least when Jo had burnt down her flat and possessions and lost her job within 24 hours. The amiable programme seemed longer than it was. Perhaps the subjects should be world famous or not famous at all. Either write *Private Lives* and play Las Vegas or hand a portentous note to the PM.

Or, of course, drop dead in a soap opera. Guy Pemberton has gone at last; his inauspiciously benevolent will never get his fillings again. Is it too much to hope that Caroline will be found guilty of poisoning him with one of Phil's recipes? Meanwhile Radio 4 contributed wonderfully to the national sense of occasion when last Monday's lunchtime repeat of *The Archers*, the first episode since the death, was cut off through technical difficulties causing dyspepsia through the script's isle. How Coward would have laughed.

Radio/Martin Hoyle

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Musical/Antony Thornecroft

For Elvis fans only

Why is it that Elvis Presley, the indispensible first cause of rock and roll, of pop music, of youth culture, of modern society, is so deeply unfashionable? If only he had died in his trim 20s rather than in his grotesque 40s he would have the respect and affection of all. But nothing can erase the pitiful movies, the sad Las Vegas years, the reclusive binges in Graceland: it was a great American tragedy.

And nothing of this fascinating morality tale disturbs the facile flow of *Elvis - The Musical*. This is one for the besotted fans, but I doubt that there are enough of them to support a show which first disturbed the public in 1977. The impression is that, like some old gramophone, for almost two decades it has been slowly winding down around the country, playing smaller and smaller

venues when suddenly, to fill a space, it re-emerges in the West End. The formula is so predictable, a template of countless musical biogs of recent years: a concert of Elvis songs, with some minimal information about the life provided by back projections of old films and slides. It is as about as illuminating as a rear light. With little to catch the eye the attention tends to wander. There is plenty to muse on.

There is the gritty determination with which the backing band seize their brief acting careers, gagging like mad, like children in a nativity play. There is the sad trick of fate that doomed Tim Whittall, who played Young Elvis in 1977, to grow quite unalike Presley in the intervening years, so that his performance as Middle Period Elvis is quite disconcerting. There is P.J. Proby, who seems to have spent more time being Elvis

than Elvis, struggling with a wig, the lyrics, and a vocal delivery better suited to the parade ground, as once again he takes a stab at the later years. There are the girl dancers, miming the routines of their pantomime years.

The saddest criticism came from the audience which was too battered and apathetic to seize its cue. In the quite rousing finale it was scheduled to take to the aisles and boogie. Instead it sat like inmates of a nursing home, passively experiencing a visiting entertainment. *Elvis - The Musical* is basically pointless. Its pleasures are the memories of the rough energy of early Elvis: of "Don't be cruel", "Mystery Train", "My baby left me" appealingly put over by Young Elvis (Alexander Bar). Like the man himself, the production cannot escape a long decline to the grave.

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ARTS

Out of tune in Never-Never land

Alastair Macaulay is not entertained by the latest revival of musical 'Salad Days'

If you badly need to know why the 1960s simply had to happen to England, the way they did, you need look no further than the present revival of the once-loved 1954 musical *Salad Days* - which, after months of touring, has just miniced into London's West End. It is winsome, coy, escapist, terminally adolescent, pathetically repressed, and, in its artfully wide-eyed way, exceptionally camp. And, in all those ways, it is a clever little précis of all that was most terrible about England. Was? Alas, is. Not even the 1960s knocked the nonsense out of the country. Which is why Ned Sherrin, Kit, and the Widow - all winsome modern mini-icons of English establishment camp - have revived this.

The England Dorothy Reynolds and Julian Slade created in *Salad Days* is full of suns, uncles, parents, and the Peter-Panish horror that one day One is going to have to become like them - is a responsible grown-up. There are, in fact, two of One here, Jane and Timothy - who agree to marry each other as a method of avoiding seriousness, but without, of course, actually being in love. Only Timothy really is in love with Jane, and then gosh Jane admits she is in love with Timothy. The grown-ups, of course, do not seem responsible, merely stupid and joyless. Timothy and Jane are stopped from becoming like them by a magic piano, which makes everyone dance who hears it play and whose mysterious tramp-owner pays them to look after it for a month. The piano favours a particularly winsome charleston number; look at me, oh! look at me, I'm dancing.

The gruesomeness of this plot may not be fully apparent. But please note the following. First, the fact that all forms of employment come to those who have the right family connections (the magical tramp-owner turns out to be another of Timothy's many uncles, as does the magical astronaut). Secondly, the way the hero and

heroine marry for fun without love - to fend off sex and adult responsibility. Thirdly, the fact that falling in love changes them in no way whatsoever from their former End-Rytonish sweet family. Fourthly, the fact that half the cast spend half the musical "looking for piano that will make you gay!" even though half of them behave as if they have found it.

Slade's music is, of course, post-Sullivan and post-Coward: pastely, pretty, harmless. But only compare his hymns to a piano here to (say) Irving Berlin's "I Love a Piano", or remember how often in Hollywood romantic comedies, couples who married without love were significantly changed for the deeper when they found they were in love; or compare what Fred and Ginger do around a London bandstand in *Top Hat* to the illustrated antics here.

Yet *Salad Days* itself is the only real reason to see this revival, which - thanks to Sherrin and co - is in many ways disgraceful. Best are the Widow (as Richard Sleson) who, though he plays a mute Pierrot-like character called Troppo, is the only member of the cast who isn't troppo - and Nicola Fulljames, who, as Jane, alone seems blithe in the 1960s "innocence" of the show.

Worst are Kit Hesketh-Devereux and Elizabeth Counsell, who both play about a dozen roles each and are sometimes indistinguishable. They mug, they attitude, they play comic caricature roles as if they were cheap one-facetted grotesques. Kit Hesketh-Devereux has always been unconvincing, insouciant, and supercilious; but occasionally, especially when performing his own clever material with the blessedly fresh Widow, he has turned those vices into witty virtues. In *Salad Days*, however, he sinks to one new low after another. But what matters what is worst? My point is that the best here is simply not enough.

At the Vandeville Theatre, London WC2



Camp squibs: Nicola Fulljames as Jane and Edward Baker-Duly as her admirer Nigel

New York Saleroom All hyped up over Jackie O

The auction of the estate of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, a four-day marathon starting in New York on Tuesday, is to the 1960s what the dispersal of the Duchess of Windsor's jewels was to the 1930s. Or so says Sotheby's, the impresario of the extravaganza that has all of New York - from taxi drivers to college professors - hoping for a piece of the action.

Perhaps the most famous American woman of this century, Jackie Onassis attracted publicity throughout her life, as wife first of President Kennedy and then Aristotle Onassis, yet remained mysterious, chiefly because she never granted interviews and made few public appearances.

So it came as something of a shock to learn that Sotheby's, the most high-profile auction house in the world, would be selling some 4,000 of her private effects, mostly from the apartment at 1040 Fifth Avenue, where she lived from 1964 to 1994. Such a sale was mentioned in the will she made shortly before her death in May 1994. Her motive was most likely to generate the most money possible for her children, John F. Kennedy, Jr. and Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg.

She chose the right place. Sotheby's announcement last December came after months of speculation. Adding to the uniqueness of the event was the news that admission to the viewing, which started yesterday, would be by lottery rather than on a "first-come first-served" basis, limited to 30,000, the names chosen at random by computer from those who purchased the catalogue.

The sumptuous 584-page catalogue - an unprecedented 100,000 of which were printed - costs \$90 in hard back and \$45 in paperback. Proceeds from the sales of the catalogue

will go to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library in Boston. For months Sotheby's publicity machine, working overtime, has whipped up a frenzy. The sale cannot fail. With all of the hoopla, it seems almost mean-spirited to point out that the auction is really an elegant garage sale of surplus goods that neither the Kennedy Library nor her children wanted.

It is also besides the point. Jackie Onassis could not be described as a collector, nor did she think of herself as one. Her apartment was pretty, comfortable and understated. Her taste - for sporting pictures, modest French furniture, Chinese export porcelain, prints, books and just plain stuff - is a reminder of how the affluent in America used to live, before the arrival of the over-decorated, over-ornamented style that became fashionable in the 1960s.

Sotheby's has put an estimate of \$5 million on the sale, but nobody takes that figure seriously. Even those who say they are going to try to buy "something, anything, that Mrs. Kennedy once touched" do not really believe that they can pick up a silver-plated beaker engraved JK for \$100-150; the black bead double-strand necklace that she wore when John F. Kennedy announced his candidacy for President for \$200-300, or one of JFK's oak rocking chairs for \$3-5,000. Pundits' estimates of what the sale will total range from \$5m upwards. Provenance is all.

Celebrity sales are clearly a big part of the future for auction houses. Masterpieces disappear from the market place continuously, and are hard to come by in any case, but estates of the rich and famous will always appear.

Amy Page

The London Symphony introduced us on Tuesday to Robin Holloway's new Third Concerto for Orchestra, op. 80 - an ambitious, expansive piece, some three-quarters of an hour long. Though the composer's programme-note insisted that "the purely musical workings... are entirely their own subject", he took care to explain the exotic beginnings of the work, on a South American journey he took 15 years ago. For it is still unmistakably music in an evocative mode: grandiose, picturesque, haunted.

While he journeyed and absorbed impressions, he made excited jottings toward a new piece. There was a long crossing of the Great Brazilian Swamp by train; the sights of the Silver Mountain at Potosi, and of radiant Lake Titicaca; a wild New Year's celebration on the Bay of Bahia. Then, in La Paz, his bag of jottings was stolen. They were impossible to recollect in detail. When he received the LSO commission for a large new Concerto in 1980 and took the South American vistas as his "subject", he had to construct it on new bases.

The work really is an orchestral concerto, insofar as every part of the band sooner or later gets its virtuoso turn, but it is also a symphonic poem. The basic material is austere - just major thirds, often conjoined to make a major-minor triad, but Holloway trades upon that to keep an audience-friendly sense of tonality in the elaborate workings-out. The interminable train-journey and

Concerts/David Murray Mountains, magic and Mörk

The vision of Silver Mountain inspired the grinding, portentous Prelude and the succeeding Chaconne; Lake Titicaca shimmers in the third movement, and then a South American dance-rhythm (in slow motion) emerges to drive the explosive Finale.

I thought that Michael Tilson Thomas conducted it all with acute sympathy and intelligence, and fine dramatic pacing - vital for such a long, virtually unbroken span of music. With another couple of performances, individual players will characterise some of the details more vividly: this is a recklessly rich score, and it needs time to assimilate.

In the Festival Hall a week earlier, Leonard Slatkin had conducted John Casken's new *Sorridge* with the Philharmonia, who commissioned it. The title-word means something like "magic spell", with a hint of the uncanny - a favourite Casken flavour.

As often with him, there is an underlying scenario, this time suggested by Tennyson's sinister *Merlin and Vivien*.

The sounds are properly magical and eerie. The form, however, has a tidier, more (dare one say) academic cut than in Casken's most imaginative pieces. Slatkin conducted a solid, workmanlike performance, somewhat short of wave and spring. Though Casken's ways of treating his material here are much like those in his *Darling of the Skiff* of three years ago, which I have enjoyed repeating on CD, in this account of *Sorridge* they made a tamer effect. A different performance might find more brilliant lights in it.

The Norwegian cellist Truls Mörk, who appeared at the Wigmore Hall on Sunday with Arthur Pizarro at the piano, is rapidly becoming famous. Now 35, he won the major competitions ten and more years ago, and his career has continued to thrive: in the past two or three seasons, however, he has been earning international acclaim of a rare order.

The acclaim has been justified. Until now I had not heard him in live perfor-

mance. At the Wigmore he played three substantial sonatas - the Prokofiev, Liszt's *First* and the Brahms *F* major - with grand eloquence and authority. Also Schumann's op. 70 *Adagio and Allegro*, composed for the French horn; cellists cannot resist borrowing it, and often one misses the forthrightness and openness of the original instrument, but not here. No horn could have sounded warmer, solder or more direct than Mörk's cello.

In fact Mörk's cello is one of his greatest assets. It is a 1728 Domenico Montagnana, and in Mörk's hands it reveals enormous tone and a striking individual character. It seems to have become his voice; one can hardly distinguish between the lustrous sound of the instrument itself and the way Mörk uses it - its speaking depth, its poignant timbre - to project his music. In legato he sings a broad, seamless line; in pizzicato the sound bounces off the back of the hall. If there are artful nuances, one hears them as natural, personal accents.

Pizarro has taken to playing a lot of chamber music lately. He made a faithful partner for Mörk, and of course there was no need for him to suppress his own rich sound at the piano. Apart from curiously bland, dull playing in the scherzo, he helped Mörk to render the Brahms sonata on a sumptuous scale. With or without him, though, future appearances by Mörk will be occasions to seek out eagerly.

Television/Ian Hargreaves

Driven to Topless Darts

Think of it as a party game. You are at home on Saturday evening. You are alone or with someone you cannot stand. You don't have the energy to read. You're not in the mood for music or food or sex or walking the dog. Is it possible to enjoy an evening of television?

On most evenings, this would be a game with no challenge. Every night of the week television has something you are irritated to miss. You look at the schedules and curse again your clumsiness with the video recorder.

But not on Saturdays. I cannot imagine that the record function on the nation's video machines is deployed at all on a Saturday evening. Perhaps it is a conspiracy between the nation's publicans and the musicians' union to drive as many of us as possible from our armchairs.

So far as I can recall, the Saturday evening formula has not changed for 20 years. In the early evening, the family game show. The long watches of the mid-evening are given over to films which anyone who goes to the cinema, has cable, belongs to Blockbuster or travels by airline has already seen. Item three is a dollop of sport. When, occasionally a factual programme or drama edges its way into the proceedings, it does so with all the self-confidence of a British minister arriving at a Brussels Agriculture Council.

Last Saturday was a more or less perfect example of the genre. We began with *Confessions*, an inadequate BBC1 effort led by Simon Mayo to uncover domestic embarrassment at the same velocity as Cilla Black queries it on *Blind Date*. This is followed by the *National Lottery*, which yielded the evening's only satire. That at least is the only explanation I can imagine for the role of Mystic Meg who makes her pointless predictions framed by two jets of smoke, which the set designer can only have intended to represent the output of twin exhaust pipes connected by rubber hose to the clairvoyant's booth.

It is difficult to think of anything one would like to do less on a Saturday than watch a man from Liverpool impersonating Gilbert O'Sullivan, but that is the kind of thing they do on *Stars in their Eyes*. A rare patch of relief was Martin Bell's report from Bosnia on *Correspondent* (BBC 2). But when you are at home seeking

relief by watching films about Bosnia on a Saturday night, you start to question your social skills.

Films and sport are there because they're there. And I could not see much point in Channel 4's *Blue Light* television since so much of our television is permanently in police custody anyway.

The most promising item in the listings was *The Governor* (ITV). Lynda La Plante's drama about a female prison boss. I enjoyed the first series, when Janet McTeer was cutting her way through male prejudice to get the job. Now she is through the glass ceiling, the most compelling aspect of the drama is gone.

A new offering last Saturday was *The Gaby Roslin Show* (Channel 4), which brings the former *Big Breakfast* partner of Chris Evans to the nodal point of the nation's prime leisure evening. Her guests, who included the transvestite comedian Eddie Izzard and Ike (one time husband of Tina) Turner

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BRAHMS
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SCHUBERT
Symphony No. 9 'Great'

CHRISTIAN TETZLAFF Violin
MICHAEL GIELEN Conductor

SWF SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BADEN BADEN
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Theatre/Ian Shuttleworth Clash of sex and class

The programme notes to the Actors Touring Company's latest production include a handy definition of theatrical naturalism. This is doubly helpful: it places Strindberg's play in a dramatic-historical context and also informs us what little respect director Nick Philippou pays to the presentational idea behind the piece. Philippou's strength as a director is his ability to turn the emotional pitch up to around 26 on a scale of ten.

However taking the same approach to *Miss Julie* as he did to *The Maids* and *No Exit* (*His Clo*) last year is a decision more perverse than inspired.

We know what we are in for from the start. The lights fall amid a blare of noise which resolves itself into sinister heavy breathing; agonised half-lit faces are visible through the translucent frontages of closets on either side of Angela Davies' stainless steel set, more reminiscent of an abattoir than the kitchen of a noble country house; the midsummer eve light which bleeds through the windows shifts during the course of the play from scarlet to electric blue to brass.

Tension in the kitchen is geared high from the outset, as Jean treats kitchen maid Kristin with the same peremptoriness that Miss Julie at first displays towards him. Gregory Motton's translation is more acidic than most, but it is the direction which creates such a comprehensive lack of sympathy. Characters function as tools and audiences for one another rather than interacting in any civil way; even in the final movement, the sense of Miss Julie and Jean as horrified, desperate conspirators

dissipates as Jean nakedly manipulates the woman who is now his mistress in every sense. The coupling of the two, visible again through the closet wall, is at best a kind of hate-sex, at worst rape.

As Julie, Kate Fenwick begins with brittle, transparently condescending grins and visible naivety, and copes well with the dangers of shrill monotony in her later panicked hysteria. Kristin Hewson's kitchen maid is sullen and resentful, using her uprightness and acquiescence as a club to belabour the others. But Peter Lindford plays unrelentingly on the odious aspects of Jean: He is all affection and twanging comedy accent, with the result that the women's relations with him are beyond comprehension.

The central elements of class, sex and power are undeniably present, but unmediated by the necessary veneer of more human dealings. Philippou lays bare the psychological skeleton of the play, but the price he pays is that it then seems only able to jerk in mechanistic spasms.

At the Gate Theatre, London W11, until 11 May (0171 229-0706).

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SPORT / MOTORING

Football / Simon Kuper

Croats try things the Wembley way

I was the first journalist to hear that Croatia would be playing England at Wembley (the match is on Wednesday). I was told about it in Zagreb on a freezing Sunday afternoon late last year by Miroslav Blazevic, Croatia's manager.

To England, the friendly is just another chance to bore 20,000-odd zealous and to see whether Paul Gascoigne has managed to lose any weight as this summer's European Championships draw near. To Croatia, also preparing for the championships, the game is an event in itself.

The team was to have paid its first ever visit to north west London last September. But the English called off the game after Croatian troops invaded the Serb-inhabited Krajina. Such was the fury in Zagreb at this snub that the British ambassador had to appear on Croat television to say it had nothing to do with him.

Franjo Tudjman, Croatia's president, took a break from making war to muse: "It would be very important for Croatia to play at Wembley." But he added: "Never

begin anybody for anything. Let England invite us again."

Few presidents spend quite as much time setting up international football matches. Tudjman is a sports fanatic, but the main reason he follows soccer so closely is that he wants to build a nation. He sees himself as Croatia's George Washington, the man who makes Croats feel Croat.

He knows Croatia cannot conquer the world, because it has a smaller population than Denmark. But, quite by chance, it has a decent generation of footballers. Zvonimir Boban, Alen Boksic and Davor Suker are among the best in Europe.

"It's not nice to say it, but those guys can do more for Croatia than a soldier giving his life," said Mark Viduka, an Australian Croat who plays for Croatia Zagreb. Viduka

had not planned to join the club at all, but Tudjman telephoned him at home in Melbourne and asked him to. For the president, football equals prestige.

"It's the same with Miss World," Zvonko Makovic, a Croatian poet, told me. "A Croatian girl is always in the top five - well, always since we became independent three years ago. This year Miss Croatia came second, even though in my view she is nothing special, and these things are very important. The Eurovision Song Festival too - these things are questions of prestige."

But football matters even more than Miss World, and Tudjman regularly discusses tactics with Blazevic before a game. "He is an expert on football," the coach explained to me. Or as the coach once told Tudjman: "After you, I

am the one who knows most about football."

It is said in Zagreb that Tudjman appointed Blazevic, but the two have had their differences. Once, Blazevic recalls, the president was playing cards with his ministers and personal doctor after a tennis match, while Blazevic sat in his usual chair behind Tudjman.

The president's party appeared to become tired of the coach being there. Blazevic recalled: "Everyone was tacitly asking me, 'What are you doing here?' But he stayed. Then Tudjman asked: 'Where is Chiro?' (his pet name for Blazevic). 'And suddenly,' said Blazevic, 'everyone smiled and started waving at me to sit next to them.'"

Now, Blazevic and Tudjman are friends again, despite the coach's brief brush with the Bernard Tapie bribery saga in France.

Their relationship even survived the recent match against Estonia. Tudjman had predicted that Croatia would win 6-1. With 15 minutes to play the score reached 6-1. Blazevic shouted to Boban, the captain: "Stop! Do not score any more." Unfortunately, recounts Blazevic, Suker made it 7-1.

But the Croatian players do usually listen to their president. They stress how much their country means to them, and they have even paid some of their own salaries to play for it.

Boban, from the patriotic south of the country, says he carries a photograph in his wallet that shows him administering an Eric Cantona-style karate kick on a Serb policeman during an ethnic riot at a Dynamo Zagreb-Bed Star Belgrade game in 1990.

This riot, proclaims a plaque

outside the Dynamo stadium, was the start of the Yugoslav war.

Now the war is over for Croatia and it wants to be part of "Europe". People in Zagreb claim that Serbia is a crude, Balkan state where people use the Cyrillic alphabet and gouge each other's eyes out, while their own country is a western country rather like Sweden or the Netherlands.

"We don't belong any more to this part of the world. We are in Europe," I was told by a man named Zajec, a Croat who captained the Yugoslav team of the 1980s.

The reality of Croatia appears less clear-cut. The visitor sees a mixture of "Europe" and the Balkans. The streets are clean and no one talks on the trams, but cafes and nightclubs have signs saying "No guns please".



Boban: among the best

Tudjman wants to be accepted by the west, and so Wembley matters. The stadium is one of the enduring symbols of western Europe - as familiar as the Pantheon or the Champs d'Elysee - and to play there is to be accepted. Or so the president feels.

It is unlikely that this weekend's London Marathon, from Blackheath to Buckingham Palace, will enjoy the impact of its famous precursor, the 1908 Olympic race from Windsor to White City. But if it does, then people will still be talking about it 100 years on, at the end of the marathon's second century.

The race was "invented" for the first Modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. Michel Bréal, a friend of the Games' resuscitator, Baron de Coubertin, suggested the long distance event, as a nod to Greek military history and the legends concocted over six centuries by an admixture of Herodotus, Plutarch and Lucian, of a messenger named Philippides, who ran for 42kms in search of reinforcements for the Athenians in their battle against the Persians at the field of Marathon in 490BC.

The modern Greeks took to the idea immediately, and the marathon became the centrepiece of the 1896 Olympics (all the more justifiably when it was won by a Greek, Spyros (or Spyridon) Louia). The event suffered setbacks in the Olympics of 1900 in Paris and 1904 in St Louis, over allegations of cheating. But the impact of the 1908 London race was to be felt way beyond the confines of the Olympics, or the city and time in which it was held. In fact, the race probably ensured the survival of this event we know today.

While it might have been a misfortune to lose an Olympic gold medal, when it was within a few metres of his winning, the circumstance of his losing was the making of Dorando Pietri, both as a legend quite the equal of Philippides, and as a rich and celebrated runner.

Dorando, as he was known, became famous for not winning an Olympic gold medal. Indeed, he didn't win any Olympic medal at all.

The two previous Olympic races had been run in unbearable temperatures of 36°C and 32°C respectively; in Paris only eight men had finished. London was only a little cooler, and very humid.

Taking drinks to avert dehydration was not only necessary but obligatory. But in those days, there was a cavalier attitude to liquid intake.

Alcohol was quite common. With three-quarters of the race run, Charles Hefferon of South Africa had a lead of almost four minutes. He decided to celebrate early with a glass of champagne. Not surprisingly, he became dizzy, suffered from stomach cramps, and slacked off the pace. Dorando caught him less than a kilometre from the finish, just outside the stadium.

But the Italian was also having problems. For equally common in those days was a practice which today would bring down the wrath of the drugs testers: Dorando was put it delicately: "It looked as if he might die in the very presence of the Queen."

Dorando revived sufficiently to be presented with a special gold cup by Queen Alexandra the following day. Yet, given that he was within 50 metres of victory, the royal family might have been blamed for Dor-



Famous for not winning an Olympic gold medal, Dorando Pietri is helped over the finishing line after gorging a mixture of red wine and strychnine during the race

Marathon

Legendary Olympic loser takes all

Pat Butcher reveals that a cocktail of wine and strychnine was regarded as a pick-me-up at the 1908 Games in London

and turned the wrong way. Redirection, he fell down half a dozen times within 100m. Everyone knew that he would be disqualified if assisted, but, eventually, help arrived. As the official Games report put it delicately: "It looked as if he might die in the very presence of the Queen."

Dorando revived sufficiently to be presented with a special gold cup by Queen Alexandra the following day. Yet, given that he was within 50 metres of victory, the royal family might have been blamed for Dor-

ando not winning the gold in the first place. Legend has it that the start in Windsor Great Park was brought inside the castle gates, so that the royal children could watch; and that the finish was extended so that the tape could be placed in front of the royal box at White City.

However, a history of Polytechnic Harriers, the club which organised the race, offers a far more prosaic view. In a pamphlet entitled, "From The Legend To The Living", an official, A.E.H. Winter, maintains that the race distance was extended

from the original 40kms because a professional race was planned on the same course, and the Olympic administrators were fearful that the pros would run faster. Hence the extra 2.195kms, making up the distance which was co-opted at the 1924 Olympics as the standard marathon length.

Johnny Hayes of the US was the official winner in London 1908, and is probably the least known Olympic marathon champion in history. Dorando became so famous for his misfortune that songs, including

one by Irving Berlin, were written about him.

The ensuing publicity created a marathon boom across the world, similar to the one of 20 years ago, which has given rise to the current big city marathon, of which there are four in Europe this weekend.

Dorando and Hayes quickly accepted offers to turn professional and with the Native American, Tom Longboat, ran several marathons (including indoors), with Dorando coming out best.

They earned a fortune for their

efforts, as do the current champions, since the demise of the amateur rules. As it is only possible to run two good marathons properly a year without burning out, the best restrict their appearances, and their price rises according to their rarity value. It is estimated that an Olympic champion can earn up to \$50,000 in a single race, including appearance money, and win bonuses.

The continuing popularity of the city centre races, where members of the public can, in theory, race

Olympic champions has barely abated. The original organisers of the Boston Marathon were the most perspicacious, creating a race in 1897, after attending the inaugural Olympic event in Athens.

Last Monday was the 100th running of the Boston. The Belgrade Marathon, including the Balkan Championships takes place today. London, Paris and Hamburg tomorrow; Madrid, Rotterdam and Wroclaw next weekend. One hundred years, millions of kilometres... and counting.

Motoring / Stuart Marshall

Alfa performs so much beta

The worst mistake Alfa Romeo ever made was to dash for growth in the early 1970s by launching Alfadas into the high-volume end of the market. This front-wheel-driven people's car had an ecstatic reception and deserved its rave reviews. I know because I was at the launch and was as entranced as everyone else by its coltish liveliness, unburstable flat-four engine and polo pony handling.

But the part-time southern Italian peasant farmers and their sons who built the factory demanded and got jobs on the assembly line. Disciplined industrial toil was beyond their comprehension. Absenteeism broke records. Strikes were on the scale of British Leyland's in the best days of Red Robb. The Alfa quality was poor. The Alfadas were unreliable, rusted in northern Europe and did nothing whatever for Alfa Romeo's reputation even though it was disowned at the marque's Milan

headquarters. It was, they said, "nothing to do with us".

The mud, of course, stuck; it always does. But now the Alfa Romeo is only a bad memory. Alfa Romeo, supported for several years by Fiat's financial muscle, is on the high of a production recovery. It has gone back to doing what it has been best at - making sporting cars for buyers who know a really good one when they see it.

Traditional Alfa Romeo buyers are going to be very happy with the new GTV and Spider. They have more than enough performance, handle impeccably and look a million dollars, although the prices, when they reach British showrooms next week, will be reassuringly down to earth at around £20,000 for the GTV, £22,000 for the Spider.

Apart from its unfortunate foray with Alfadas, Alfa Romeo has always been at the gold cufflinks and Gucci loafers end of the market. Its milestone sports cars have included the 1900 Super Sprint Coupé

and Cabriolet of 1954, the Giulietta Sprint Coupé and Spider and GT Junior of 1968.

Best known of all was the 1966 Spider Duetto. Can anyone who saw *The Graduate* ever forget Dustin Hoffman racing against time in his

that it demonstrated how much chassis design had progressed.

Cornered hard on bumpy roads, the old Duetto bucked like a wild horse. The new GTV I drove in north-east Scotland a few days ago would not only have left the old car for dead; its exhilaration was matched by its comfort.

The front-wheel driven GTV has a 1970cc in-line 4-cylinder engine one might easily mistake for a good V6, so slyly does it spin up to high revolutions, so sturdily does it pull low down. State-of-the-art features include two spark plugs and four valves with variable timing per cylinder, a steel crankshaft with eight counterweights and twin contra-rotating balance shafts. It puts out 150 horsepower at 6,300rpm, but delivers 90 per cent of its peak torque (maximum pulling power) at only 2,500rpm.

So, while the GTV delighted the senses when given its head on the deserted roads of Caith-

ness, it did not fidget when trickling through villages at under 50mph/48kph in top. The standard 5-speed gearbox has a clean, quick shift. Power-assistance and only 2.2 turns from lock to lock make the steering exceptionally precise.

Much of the credit for the GTV's and the mechanically identical Spider's tenacious roadholding and elegant handling belongs to a new multi-link rear suspension attached to a light alloy subframe. This maximises tyre grip by keeping the wheels vertical while allowing a desirable trace of rear-wheel steering.

Inside, the deeply cowed main instruments and the minor gauges angled toward the driver look purposeful. The leather covered steering wheel adjusts for height and reach; the seats are hard but supportive. Two people can be crammed uncomfortably into the back for short distances. For a 2+2, the GTV's boot is adequate, the Spider's less so, because of the hood.



Supersport: the new Alfa Romeo GTV

My one real complaint is that the windscreen is so shallow and its top so low that after two or three hours I began to feel claustrophobic. But I am told that stunning good looks - and GTV and Spider really are supermodels - are rarely achieved without

some discomfort. The new cars feel rock solid and come with a three-year, 60,000-mile (100,000km) warranty.

Alfa Romeo (GB) reckons the GTV and Spider will compete mainly with the new Rover MGF, Audi Cabrio 2.0E, Saab 900 and BMW 320i convertibles

and the as yet unseen in Britain BMW Z3. I am sure they will. But they could also appeal strongly to people who, covet a Ferrari or Porsche 911, but whose bank managers insist they must match their resources.

صوتنا من الامم

INTERNATIONAL ARTS GUIDE

What's on in the principal cities

AMSTERDAM

CONCERT

Concertgebouw Tel: 31-20-5730573
● Radio Filharmonisch Orkest: with conductor Edo de Waart and baritone Olaf Bär perform Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and *Symphony No.1*; 8.15pm; Apr 22

EXHIBITION

De Nieuwe Kerk Tel: 31-20-6288168
● World Press Photo: exhibition showing the World Press Photo 1996 and other selected press photos; from Apr 26 to Jun 9

OPERA

Het Muziektheater Tel: 31-20-5518117
● La Bohème: by Puccini. Conducted by Hartmut Haenchen and performed by De Nederlandse Opera. Soloists include Roberto Aronica, Paul Whelan, Ainhoa Arteta and Lucio Gallo; 8pm; Apr 22, 25, 28 (2.30pm); May 2

BALTIMORE

ART & ANTIQUE FAIR
Baltimore Museum of Art Tel: 1-410-396-8310
● 1996 Baltimore Contemporary Print Fair: the seventh edition of this annual fair devoted to contemporary prints. The proceeds will be used to purchase contemporary prints and drawings for the museum's collection; Apr 28

CONCERT

Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall Tel: 1-410-793-9000
● Requiem: by Berlioz. Performed by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, the University of Maryland Chorus and students from The Peabody Conservatory of Music of the John Hopkins University with conductor David Zinman and tenor John Aler; 8.15pm; Apr 25, 28

BARCELONA

EXHIBITION
Fundació Joan Miró Tel: 34-3-3291009
● Alain Fleischer. Photographs: this exhibition forms part of the Primavera Fotogràfica. After studying literature at the Sorbonne, Fleischer became fascinated by films, where he was to work professionally and more or less uninterrupted since making his first feature film in 1988. His photographic work demonstrates the artist's desire to avoid limiting himself to a single artistic discipline. Also showing is a cycle of Alain Fleischer films is shown; from Apr 25 to Jun 18

THEATRE

The Goodman Theatre Tel: 1-312-443-3600
● A Touch of the Poet: by Eugene O'Neill. Directed by Robert Falls. The cast includes Pamela Payton-Wright, Jenny Bacon and Brian Dennehy; Mon May 6: 7pm, Tue-Thu, Sun 7.30pm; Fri, Sat 8pm, Thu, Sat, Sun also 2pm; from Apr 26 to Jun 8

BASEL

EXHIBITION
Museum für Gegenwartskunst Tel: 41-61-220828
● Robert Gober: exhibition centred on four new works by the American artist: three sculptural objects and an installation designed for the basement room of the museum. Alongside these works drawings and maquettes are shown; to Apr 28

BATH

EXHIBITION
Victoria Art Gallery Tel: 44-1225-477000
● Sir Matthew Smith 1879-1958: retrospective exhibition surveying the contribution made by Sir Matthew Smith to 20th century British painting, and offering insight into his work. Almost 400 works are featured, spanning the period 1901 to 1959. All the exhibits were taken from the material remaining in Smith's studio at the time of his death; from Apr 27 to Jun 15

BERLIN

CONCERT
Konzerthaus Tel: 49-30-203090
● Berliner Sinfonie-Orchester: with conductor Michael Schneider, mezzo-soprano Randi Stone and pianist Dinorah Varsi perform works by Haydn, Mozart and De Falla; 8pm; Apr 25, 26, 27
● Orfeo ed Euridice: by Gluck. Conducted by Howard Arman and performed by the Komische Oper. Soloists include Wiedstruck, Dertel and Kowalski; 8pm; Apr 21

BOLOGNA

CONCERT
Teatro Comunale di Bologna Tel: 39-51-529901
● Stanislav Bunin: the pianist performs nocturnes and scherzos by Chopin; 8pm; Apr 22

BONN

OPERA
Oper der Stadt Bonn Tel: 49-228-7281
● Der Rosenkavalier: by R. Strauss. Conducted by Shuja Olatu and performed by the Oper Bonn. Soloists include Michael Gessendorf, Jane Bunnell and Michael Volle; 7pm; Apr 25, 28 (8pm); May 3

BOSTON

CONCERT
Boston Symphony Hall Tel: 1-617-266-1492
● Boston Symphony Orchestra: with conductor Bernard Haitink perform works by Webern, Ravel and Shostakovich; 8pm; Apr 25, 28 (1.30pm); 27

BUENOS AIRES

CONCERT
Teatro Colón Tel: 54-1-3822389
● Matthäus Passion: by J.S. Bach. Performed by the Orquesta



Detail from Picasso's 'Portrait of Igor Stravinsky' on show in New York

Filarmónica de Buenos Aires, the Coro Lago Onak and the Coro de Niños del Teatro Colón, conducted by Helmuth Rilling; 8pm; Apr 29

CAMBRIDGE

EXHIBITION
Fitzwilliam Museum Tel: 44-1223-332900
● From Cranach to Klee: German, Swiss and Scandinavian Drawings: exhibition of drawings from the museum's collection. Most of the works, including drawings by Cranach, Huber, Springer, Hölzer, Kauffmann, Füssli, Jockel, Marzani, Noide, Klee and Grosz, have never been exhibited before; to Apr 28

Shakespeare Company. The cast includes Edward Petherbridge, Delia Lewis and Paul Greenwood; 7.30pm; Apr 23, 24 (also 1.30pm); 25, 26, 27 (also 2pm)

CHICAGO

CONCERT
Chicago Orchestra Hall Tel: 1-312-435-6666
● Chicago Symphony Orchestra: with conductor Dennis Russell Davies and violinist Samuel Magad perform works by Dvořák, Copland and Kancheli; 7.30pm; Apr 29

THEATRE

The Goodman Theatre Tel: 1-312-443-3600
● A Touch of the Poet: by Eugene O'Neill. Directed by Robert Falls. The cast includes Pamela Payton-Wright, Jenny Bacon and Brian Dennehy; Mon May 6: 7pm, Tue-Thu, Sun 7.30pm; Fri, Sat 8pm, Thu, Sat, Sun also 2pm; from Apr 26 to Jun 8

CINCINNATI

EXHIBITION
Cincinnati Museum Tel: 1-513-241-0343
● Adriaen van Ostade: Etchings of Peasant Life in Holland's Golden Age: travelling exhibition of works by the 17th century artist Adriaen van Ostade. The exhibits, including 50 etchings, three paintings and a colour drawing, come from a private collection; to Apr 21

COLOGNE

CONCERT
Kölner Philharmonie Tel: 49-221-204020
● Moscow Soloists: with conductor/ violinist Yuri Bashmet perform works by Dvořák, Britten, Stravinsky and Prokofiev; 8pm; Apr 22
● NDR-Sinfonieorchester: with conductor Günter Wand perform Beethoven's *Symphony No.4* and Brahms' *Symphony No.1*; 8pm; Apr 25
● Otello: by Verdi. Conducted by James Conlon and performed by the Oper Köln. Soloists include Frederic Kalt, Katarina Delavany and Gino Quilico; 7.30pm; Apr 26

COPENHAGEN

DANCE
Det Kongelige Teater Tel: 45-33 14 10 02
● La Sylphide: a choreography by August Bournonville and Peter Schaufuss to music by Herman Løvenskiöld, performed by the Royal Danish Ballet; 8pm; Apr 23, 24, 25, 27; May 2

DUBLIN

CONCERT
National Concert Hall - Geórgios Násifóntas Tel: 353-1-6711888
● National Symphony Orchestra: with conductor Kasper de Roo and violinist Corey Carovack perform works by Rossini, Mozart and Shostakovich; 8pm; Apr 26

EDINBURGH

CONCERT
The Queen's Hall Tel: 44-131-558821
● Malcolm Martineau, Lorna Anderson, Catherine Wynne-Rogers and Christopher Maltman: the pianist, soprano, mezzo-soprano and baritone perform works by Schubert and R. Schumann; 7.45pm; Apr 23

EXHIBITION

National Gallery of Scotland Tel: 44-131-558821
● Awash in Colour: Great American Watercolours from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: this exhibition presents a collection of more than 50 watercolours, and includes works by Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe and John Singer Sargent; from Apr 26 to Jul 14

THEATRE

Edinburgh Festival Theatre Tel: 44-131-5296000
● Twelfth Night or What you Will: by Shakespeare. Directed by Ian Judge and performed by the Royal

Wigmore Hall Tel: 44-171-9352141
● Schubert: 1815, Portrait of a Year: programme devoted to 1815, the "annus mirabilis" of Schubert when he composed more than 200 songs, featuring soprano Christine Schäfer, tenor Ian Bostridge, baritone Maarten Koningsberger and pianist Graham Johnson; 8pm; Apr 24

EXHIBITION
Tate Gallery Tel: 44-171-9876000
● Cézanne: retrospective exhibition offering an opportunity to assess the work of this 19th century French painter. The display includes more than 80 paintings and about 80 watercolours and drawings borrowed from public and private collections throughout the world; to Apr 28

JAZZ & BLUES
Ronnie Scott's Tel: 44-171-4390747
● Echos of Ellington: with special guests the Mike Carr Trio; 10.45pm & 1am; from Apr 22 to Apr 28

OPERA
Royal Opera House - Covent Garden Tel: 44-171-2129234
● Tosca: by Puccini. Conducted by Evelino Pidó and performed by the Royal Opera. Soloists include Nelly Miricioiu, José Cura, Robin Leggate and Anthony Michaels-Moore; 7.30pm; Apr 23, 26

CONCERT
Salle Pleyel Tel: 33-1 45 61 53 00
● Ensemble Orchestral de Paris: with conductor Jean-Jacques Kantorow, flutist Andreas Adorjan and soprano Edith Wiens perform works by Mozart and J.S. Bach; 8.30pm; Apr 23

EXHIBITION
MOCA at California Plaza Tel: 1-213-626-6222
● Ed Moses: the first important retrospective of Moses' work includes about 45 paintings and 25 drawings spanning his career, starting with a group of largely unknown egg tempera paintings (c. 1952) and ending with a group of recent abstract paintings; from Apr 21 to Aug 11

OPERA
Dorothy Chandler Pavilion Tel: 1-213-972-8001
● L'Elisir d'Amore: by Donizetti. Conducted by Gabriele Ferro and performed by the Los Angeles Opera. Soloists include Ramon Vargas, Alison Hagley, Gerald Finley and Thomas Allen; 7.30pm; Apr 24, 27, 30; May 3

EXHIBITION
Musée des Beaux-Arts Tel: 33-72 10 17 40
● François-Auguste Ravier (1814-1893): retrospective exhibition devoted to the work of this French landscape painter. The display includes about 140 paintings and watercolours, and 20 photographs; to Apr 27

EXHIBITION
Fundación Cultural Mapfre Vida Tel: 34-1-5811828
● Eugenio Lucas: exhibition devoted to the Spanish painter Eugenio Lucas Velázquez (1817-1870), of whom many works have been mistaken for works by Goya or Velázquez, and vice versa. Among the exhibits are 33 paintings from the collection of the National Museum in Havana. The display also includes works by Eugenio Lucas' son Lucas Villamil, who applied himself to imitating his father; to Apr 21

EXHIBITION
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal Tel: 1-514-285-1800
● The Unknown Modigliani. Drawings from the Collection of Paul Alexandre: exhibition of 373 previously unknown drawings by Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920). The works were conserved by Paul Alexandre, a friend and benefactor of the artist. The drawings bear witness to a crucial period in Modigliani's artistic development, from 1906 to 1914. The works have already been exhibited in Venice, London, Cologne, Bruges, Tokyo, Lisbon and Madrid; to Apr 28

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CHESS

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) has been widely condemned for the proposal to stage its Karpov v Kasparov title match in Baghdad in June. European chess bodies will meet soon, and there could be disaffiliations. Even sans Iraq, the world championship situation is murky. Intel has withdrawn backing from Garry Kasparov's breakaway group which staged his match with India's Anand, while Fide has jettisoned the traditional championship international and announced instead an annual mini-match knock-out starting in December.

Among many possible scenarios, the most interesting for UK players will be if the KO championship goes ahead boycotted by all three Ks. Our No 2, Michael Adams, has just finished runner-up in the New York Open immediately after winning an invitation event there, (M Adams-J Benjamin, Sicilian Defence).

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e5 3 c3 A subtle trick. 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 d4 Nf5 5 Nf3 Bg4 6 h3 Karpov defended against the IBM super-computer. Deep Blue, whose grandmaster adviser was Benjamin. So Adams has spoilt his opponent's pre-game homework.

Nf5 4 e5 Nf5 5 d4 exd4 6

exd4 b6 d6 challenging the centre is normal. 7 Bc4 Bb5 8 Bxb5 Nxb5 9 Bb2 Bc6 10 Nbd2 Bxb5 11 Nac7 12 Bg5 B6 13 exf6 Nxf6 14 Bxf6 exf6 15 Re1 d5 16 Nf3 Qd7? White has only a small edge, but Black underestimates the danger to his king. Better is Bb6 at once, when if 17 Nf4 B5 threatens Qxb4.

17 Nf4 Bb6 18 f4 B5 19 Nf5 Qd7 20 Rf3 Kf8 Qxb5? loses the Q. 21 Rb3 Bg8 22 Nf3 Qe7 23 Qe2 Ne6 24 Re5 Qd7 25 Ne5 Qe7 26 Rxd6! Nxd6 If Qxd6 27 Nf7 mate. 27 Ne6 Resigns. Qe7 28 Qe5+ wins at least a piece.

No 1124

White mates in three moves, against any defence (by SM Katz, 1994).

Solution, Page 11

Leonard Barden

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James Morgan

No place for the great unwanted

It's quite worrying why up-market outfits might go to some lengths to avoid my patronage

The puff reads: "The purr of your high-powered engine dies away. The valet takes the key from your proffered hand, you are wadded by Regency-style elevator to our welcome desk where your personalised check-in awaits. You tread the plush Italian luxury carpet tiles in the oak-paneled corridor that ushers you to your preferred suite, knowing your favored 'tippie' has been placed in the exclusive en-suite bar by our ever attentive staff. You lay down in the folds of our exclusive overstuffed emperor-size bed, relax over a favorite TV programme, contemplate the enjoyment of our 'in-house' Jacuzzi and sports club..."

And then, perhaps, you throw up. The most famous remark about advertising, the one about half the money spent being wasted, is a cliché. And it is wrong. Half the money is spent to ensure a high-class product is not contaminated by association with people like me. There is a celebrated, perhaps apocryphal, story of the chic parfumer who found he sold too much to the wrong sort of people. Research showed that these unwanted buyers hated jazz and monochrome pictures. So commercials, using both elements, were placed in a prime-time prole soap. Sales showed a gratifying slump. But it is worrying that so many suppliers of desirable items should do so much to avoid my patronage.

Thus, when BMW said its new model offered "More litres, less gallons", it became impossible for any self-respecting pedant to be seen dead in a BMW (if such an image is permitted in this context). Car commercials usually repel. Europe features playlets based on the seven deadly sins, lust and envy taking the key roles; the US has men in hideous suits shouting from suburban wastelands. Then there are the hotels. The Four Seasons chain has a domineering woman, clad in what she would call "luxury rainwear", and a yapping doglet, similarly attired, bursting in and demanding that both garments be cleaned overnight. I would go to some lengths to avoid a Holiday Inn in fact, to avoid

running into such a pair. A new restaurant puff claims: "Celebrities, like all Radisson Edwardian's enchanting hotel restaurants, truly recapture the spirit of a golden era. [And we mean Edwardian, not Hollywood.] Just imagine what Oscar Wilde could have done if there had been such a 'Celebrities' in his time. Let's be even more imaginative: open a medieval restaurant in the Tower of London and call it 'The Astronaut'." But the fact is that Celebrities Restaurant would rather not see the face that adorns this column scowling from its cheery throng of pop singers, fashion models and soap opera stars and has cleverly eliminated the risk. And no man-

ufacturer of luxury cars would want my custom either, even if I had the money. Would he wish to see his fine product terminally unwashed on suburban streets, seats littered with sun-dried parking notices culled from downtown boroughs? The discriminating hotelier, meanwhile, prefers those who can take in their stride all his carefully constructed possibilities for instant gratification. Many of us could no more call for a plate of sushi at 4am than demand a cassette of *Mary Poppins*. Maybe it is the alien, not their clients, who reject us. They are the world-class consumers, so they naturally construct images they find seductive. It is they alone who believe their

constipated prose, synonymous as it is with the traditional elegance that enhanced the leisured lifestyle of a bygone, more gracious age. And advertising people like nothing better than the company of those like themselves. "You park the ancient Ford at a convenient meter and relax in line before receiving a form and a room key. You know nobody will bother you, apart from making up your room before 11am. Nobody will call you by your name or disturb you with expensive offers. The five alarms work and the structure is earthquake proof to 10 on the Richter scale." This would tell me someone wants me. James Morgan is BBC World Service economics correspondent.

Peter Aspdon

Faster, higher - and richer



I wonder who is having the more stressful time. Is it those perspiring athletes shaving hundredths of seconds off their times in training in a bid for Olympic glory, or the transport planners of Atlanta, Georgia, wondering how on earth they will move (take a deep breath) 2.2m spectators, 17,000 journalists, 10,500 athletes and 5,500 coaches and officials round their luckless city.

These are two types of Olympic dream, after all: one of ultimate personal fanaticism, the triumph of body over mind; the other of smooth, clock-like precision, a victory for anonymous back-room planning. Both can turn all too easily into nightmare, whether it is the untimely tweak of an over-tight hamstring or a worst-case scenario traffic jam which brings the entire city to a standstill. But it is the sport itself, rather than the meticulous logistics behind it, that will fascinate an estimated global television audience of 4bn viewers this summer. That, if one pays any regard at all to the Olympic ideal, is as it should be. The motto of the Games is *citius, altius, fortius*, faster, higher, stronger; if Baron Pierre de Coubertin and his philhellene cohorts had meant to add "and don't forget the television rights", no doubt they could have dreamt up a witty piece of cod-classicism to warn us. But sentiment only takes you so far. Backward-looking romanticism lost out to modern-day power-broking when Atlanta won the 1996 Olympic Games at the expense of Athens, furiously playing its nostalgic card when the rest of its hand consisted of petrol fumes, bad attitude and a general air of dilapidation. Its bluff was duly called.

Romanticism lost out to modern-day power-broking when Atlanta won at the expense of Athens

Here was the ultimate lesson in modern sport: if you are going to hark back to 1896, make sure your city does not look like it has not received any investment since then. To run an efficient sporting tournament today, you need money. Sponsorship, media rights, licensing are the obsequious offspring of the modern Olympic family, sporting ideals its ageing aunts. So sensitive is the International Olympic Committee on the issue of commercialism, however, that it has produced an extraordinary video. It shows what a 4 X 100 metres relay race would look like in an age of untrammelled sponsored programming.

It starts with the athletes on the starting line: the Jaguar Great Britain team, the Pirelli Italians, etc. The starter-gun (brought to you by the National Rifle Association) gets them going. Each handover of the baton, naturally, has a different sponsor. The winning athlete crosses the Ford Finish Line in a Nike World Record Time. Let's see it again in Sony Super Slow-Mo. And so on, and so on. An audience of British journalists laughed as the tape was shown to them this week. But there was a certain amount of ice in the laughter. In truth, the fantastical video bore some resemblance to the reality of certain sporting events. The IOC is proud that it has not gone too far down this road: it staunchly opposes shirt sponsorship and billboard advertising around the stadia, for example. Yet once more, it is not just a story of lofty ideals. The committee is shrewd enough to understand that a negatively attitude towards brands has an immense brand value in itself. Those five rings would mean a lot less if they were festooned with the names of multinationals, despite any short-term gain.

Crucially, the Olympic sponsors also understand this. The "top ten" companies have paid upwards of \$40m each for the privilege of being associated with the Atlanta Games. They are able to show fresh, wholesome images of young people having a good time, and we are seduced into their life insurance schemes, their computers, their soft drinks. In fact, not many people care very much whether Olympic-supporting Coca-Cola manages to sell more cans in the sweltering heat of Atlanta than newly blue Pepsi. It is sporting excellence that we want to see, and there will be plenty of that. We should, of course, remember that faster, higher, stronger is making people richer, fatter, happier. But it is all part of the fun, and I am sure the Greeks would have approved.

Lunch with the FT

A stream of large-talk from one of 'the top ones'

Nigel Spivey hears Jonathan Miller's views on science, religion, society and art

He chose roast cod. Food for the brain, as Jeeves would have said. But in this case, hardly necessary. Brain quite muscular enough without the stimulus of roast cod. From the moment that Jonathan Miller sat down it was clear that he was in the mood for vigorous intellectual exercise.

This is not to say that small-talk was a depth to which he could not stoop. But large-talk is what he likes. And the intimidating fact is that it seems to spill from him both generously and spontaneously.

We met in one of London's most pleasant places, Odette's on Primrose Hill. It is walking distance from the Miller residence. A waiter told me that he would surely recognise Dr Miller. "He is one of the top ones, out? All the top ones they live around here. Mr Pinter, Mr Bennett." And true to the anticipated arrival of the most learned of the top ones, Miller rumbled into the restaurant carrying a pile of books.

I opened briskly. Possibly I sensed that if I wanted to say anything during this encounter I had better get my contribution in sooner rather than later. "Now whatever else I do," I declared, "I am not going to call you a Renaissance man. You're simply not sporty enough. You couldn't, I mean, throw a cricket ball over the dome of Florence cathedral."

"You're quite right," he said, tapping a packet of Silk Cut. Comfortably (from a doctor) he managed much of his discourse with a cigarette hanging from his lips.

"When I went to medical school I avoided all the rugby-playing ones. And all the overly Christian ones too - and all those with saints in their titles. That doesn't leave many. Just University College, really. An historically godless institution, presided over by the preserved genius of Jeremy Bentham in a glass case."

"There you are," I said. "Not Renaissance, but Enlightenment man. Is that all right?"

The idea did not displease him. He leaned back and sent a preliminary puff to the ceiling.

"I mean," I continued, "you believe we will be saved by our own

rationality. You don't believe in God."

"Of course not," he replied. "Of course I understand God as a literary construct, rather like I understand what a Jabberwock might be. But I could no more contemplate worshipping God than I could think of practising witchcraft."

The arrival of a dish of rocket leaves did not disturb what soon developed into a typical stream of Millerian exposition.

"Marx was quite wrong about religion when he called it the opium of the people. It's not an opiate at all. Much more like an amphetamine. It stimulates people into unnatural actions and sentiments, dissolves their normal cognitive powers."

"What should be taught at school is not religion but philosophy. To teach someone to philosophise is to equip them with a highly precise mental tool kit. Out comes a problem: in you go with this intellectual equipment, to sort it out."

So he is a philosopher. Does he also think of himself as a scientist?

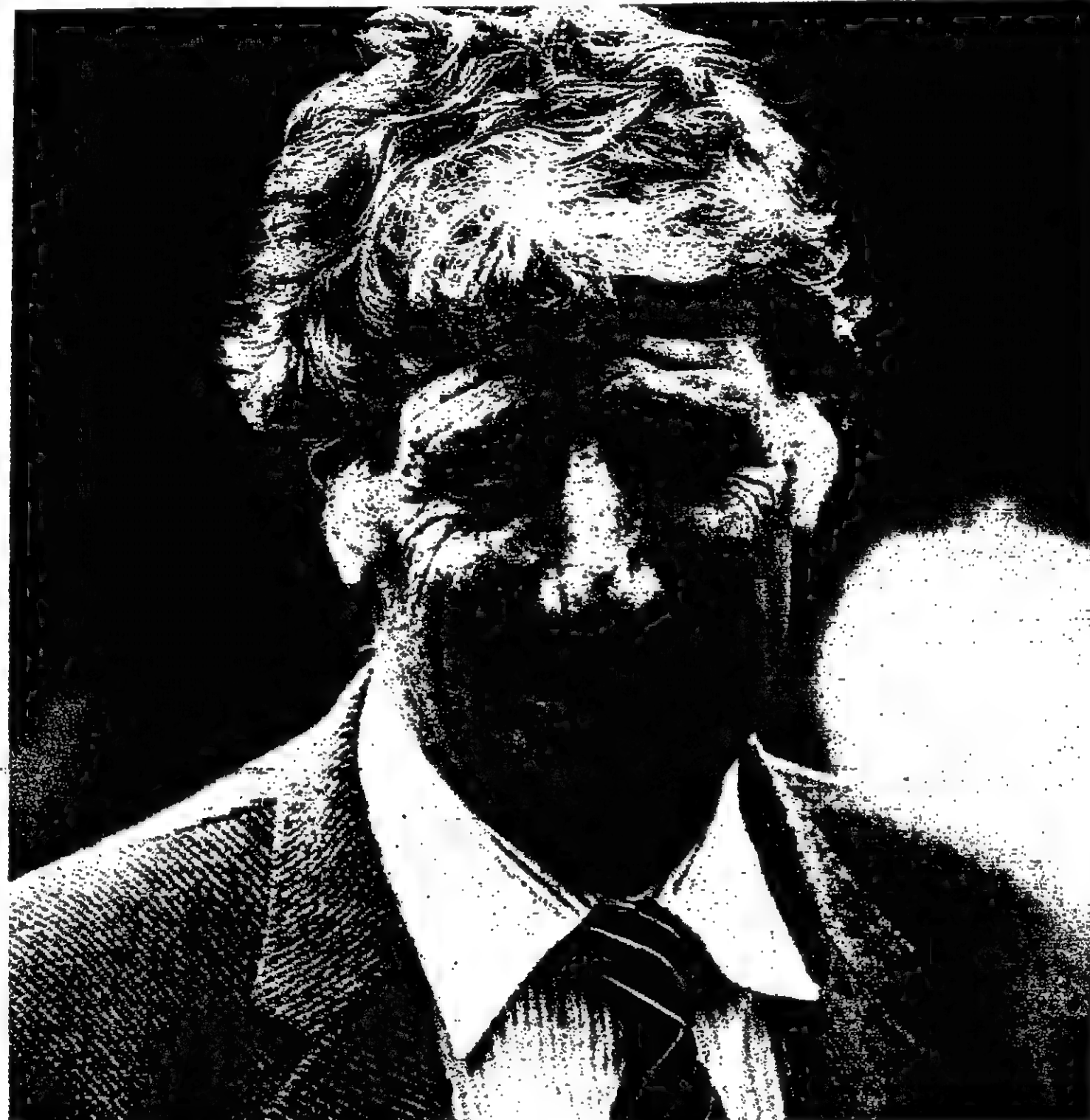
"I keep up," he said, nodding at the pile of biological tomes on the table. "A spectator, really. Both the scientific ignorance of my types and the cultural illiteracy of most scientists equally disturb me."

"And I'm not convinced by the apparent popularity of some scientific writers. I shouldn't say this about Stephen Hawking, because it sounds malignant. But I will. He assumes that Delphic mode of utterance which, because it's impenetrable, people take for profundity. Mantic science makes no sense to me."

"And yet I can't quite tolerate, either, the intense positivism of someone like Steve Jones [the geneticist] who never sees that scientific knowledge is hedged about by historical and cultural limits."

A number of other distinguished intellectuals came under Miller's lunchtime inspection, and were found wanting. I recalled Miller's adroit parody of Bertrand Russell in his *Beyond the Fringe* days. Does he still do such acts?

"I haven't done comedy as such for 35 years. But I make my casts laugh when I'm directing. That's often how I extract their best performance. And my children make



Jonathan Miller: one of his pet areas of research happens to be one of his best skills - the use of 'paralanguage'

me laugh at myself. Stops me getting pompous."

Big Britain generally prevent intellectuals from getting pompous?

"Like the French? Posturing windbags spouting balderdash? Yes. We're always got those leather-elbowed thugs like Richard Ingrams making sure we don't bring too much sensitivity into the country."

"But you have to feel pity, at the other end, for the Sun readers. I have these exchanges with the Camden market stallholders, with them giving me the old 'you, what is the world coming to guy?' line. I stop and say, 'Look, to you I'm a toff, and a yid: I'm part of your problem.'"

"They see boys dressed as girls, girls dressed as boys, tribal markings in the middle of London - their universe has just become incoherent. They're lost. And all they've got as heaven or hell is the National Lottery."

He sighed, as if remedying the outlook of the average Camden market-trader was an intolerable

daily burden to him. He admits to being much happier in the rootless streets of New York.

He became even more gloomy when the subject of John Birt's BBC was raised - on which his remarks are probably unrepeatable. This gloom provoked despair in another direction. "Why do liberals defeat themselves?" he suddenly demanded. "Why do they make such fools of themselves?"

I gulped. With Miller, one is never quite sure what is coming next as a conversational tangent. "Example?"

"Oh, you know. That teacher who wouldn't take her schoolchildren to see *Romeo and Juliet* on the grounds that it was the epitome of heterosexual love. The people who say that when Robert Mapplethorpe takes pictures of himself with a bullwhip up his arse, it's art. Betrayals of common sense like that. And good manners."

The printed word does not convey the proper force of Miller's discourse. One of his pet areas of research happens to be one of his

best skills, which is the use of "paralanguage" - gestures, inflections, facial distortions and grunts and growls which nuance the meaning of what we say. His craggy Semitic features and his long arms add so much to what he says.

"And good manners," for instance, carried the self-consciously fastidious tightening of his tie, with little finger cocked.

"Good manners?" I queried. "Manners. Affections. As Anden said, there is nothing to despise in these. They are the means by which humanity raises itself by its bootstraps."

He beamed. "Those wretched clumps. They can recognise their own reflection. Just five DNA spaces away from us."

How long I could have continued playing Roswell to Miller's Johnson I do not know: certainly we went well beyond pudding. The waiter who had wanted to see one of the top ones in action was given good value.

We eventually ended our meeting with what I take to be a crucial

qualification of Miller's earlier admission of straight atheism. I asked him which of his many and varied productions had given him inner satisfaction.

"Once upon a time," he said, unusually slowly, "I dramatised the St Matthew Passion. Very simple. Small stage. The music, and a few actors. It moved me - moved every one involved in it, including the audience - like nothing else."

He grimaced, broadly. "If you think about that story, what is so striking is how hasty it all was. Hasty street, hasty trial, hasty denials, and so on. But the haste and the messiness somehow heighten the message."

Miller lapsed into a moment of rare silence. "Uniquely tragic," he murmured. For one whose faith was in rationality: whose only discipleship was as one of the elite intellectual club of "Apostles" at Cambridge, and who describes himself as a "Jew by default", this was a key index of his profound and passionate humanism.

Truth of the Matter / Hugh Dickinson

There is such a thing as society

The trouble is that Religion gives religion a bad name. Tony Blair's mild confession that his reading of the Christian Gospel tended towards a vision of mutually supportive community rather than individualist acquisitiveness is a case in point. Many Christians might feel he had been altogether too mimsy in affirming his belief.

The reaction of the media and the politically garrulous is frankly so bizarre that anyone of a psycho-analytic turn of mind must wonder where all that frenzy has been displaced from.

One conclusion we may draw is that religion is still a significant psychic force in our society, and therefore of considerable political sensitivity. The rush to anathematise anyone who suggests that religion and politics are inevitably and properly intertwined may be driven by those who fear that the synalabs of Rome or Canterbury are mobilising the forces of fanaticism on the wrong side.

Do I hear shrieks of rage from the

cabinet or the 1922 Committee when an archbishop murmurs (they seldom shout these days) that the increase of wealth is a legitimate goal for society? I do not. But when a bishop says that that wealth should be responsibly and fairly distributed the roof falls in.

Let us try to be fair. Religion has too often been used as a tool of state with disastrous results. Religions have taken over states or parties with catastrophic consequences. The notion of a Christian state or a Christian political party is fraught with dangers both for the Church and for the community.

Disappointment or imprisonment or taxation in the name of Christ (or Allah or Jehovah) is morally and politically disastrous - especially for the victim. God must never have

a seat on the bench or in the cabinet, for that leaves no final court of appeal.

Dictators, it is said, hate laughter because it is a sign of freedom. They also hate religion because it involves an authority beyond their own, as Roman emperors found to their cost. That is just the point. True religion is always beyond, never party to, a regime.

There are also many parallel warnings to the Church, or any religious institution, which gets into bed with those in power.

Many Anglicans believe that the Church of England has cohabited with the political establishment in the UK far too easily for its own health, and Roman Catholic alliances with the military juntas of South America have been at terrible

cost in terms of freedom and justice. Authoritarian regimes and authoritarian religions are natural allies and equally despicable.

But that is not the whole story. The (co)operative bloodless revolution in South Africa is surely a hugely persuasive argument for the benefits of a shared vision which has its roots in a deeply religious system of values.

Not only the leaders of the ANC - many schooled in the Christian missions by Trevor Huddleston - but many white South Africans nurtured in the Dutch Reformed Church, found themselves speaking a common language of forgiveness and reconciliation across the chasm of apartheid. There are many secular witnesses to the crucial significance of those shared religious val-

ues in the evolution of the new South Africa.

The conclusion to which I come personally is not so far from Tony Blair. Right-wing libertarians argue that religion is essentially private and personal and must be kept out of the public domain.

It is true that the teaching of Jesus is mainly (not entirely) addressed to the individual. But the vision and the values he taught have an ineluctable logic for communities and society as a whole.

Within 20 years of Christ's death, Paul is extrapolating from the basic moral and spiritual vision into radical insights about community life and the whole national identity. The abolition of the wall between Jew and Gentile has huge political consequences.

Picking a text here and there can prove anything and nothing. My own reading of the overall thrust and ethos of Christianity, which balances its many different strands and emphases, is that it offers (but cannot command) an ethos which advocates co-operation not competitive rivalry; mutual interdependence not individual acquisitiveness; a bias to the poor not aggrandisement of the rich; shared responsibility not private rights; forgiveness and restitution not punitive vindictiveness; transparency not concealment; a concern for the weak not sycophancy to the strong; and a vision of the Kingdom on Earth which subverts all human claims to ultimate authority, truth and legitimacy made by state or party whether of the left or right.

I, for one, will be looking at the long-awaited election manifestos with those touchstones in my hand and I warn to anyone who has the courage to declare that they share them. Hugh Dickinson is the Dean of Salisbury.

Weekend Investor

Wall Street

No such thing as a cheap breakfast

Maggie Urry says 'grape nut Monday' will be good for consumers but bad for earnings

There was some good news for breakfast cereal eaters in the US this week, when Post, the third largest cereal maker in the country, decided to cut wholesale prices by as much as a dollar a box.

Post is owned by Philip Morris, famous for slashing the price of its Marlboro cigarettes three years ago this month. The price cuts are similar at around 20 per cent.

The strategy is similar too. Philip Morris, and other tobacco groups, had raised the price of top brand cigarettes so much that consumers were switching to cheap, own label cigarettes. By cutting the price of Marlboro, Philip Morris reduced the differential and recouped lost market share.

The same has been happening in the breakfast cereal market. Top brands are scandalously expensive and consumers are switching to cheaper store brands or giving up their cornflakes altogether.

Thus Philip Morris is hoping to repeat the success of its Marlboro marketing strategy with cereals. The difference, though, is that as the number three player in the cereal market, rather than the leading brand, its competitors are under less pressure to follow with price cuts of their own.

What's more, many consumer groups expect the supermarkets to hold on to a large part of the price cut rather than pass it to customers. So 'grape nut Monday', as it has been dubbed, is unlikely to have the same effect that Marlboro Friday had, either on the price of cereals or the price of Philip Morris shares.

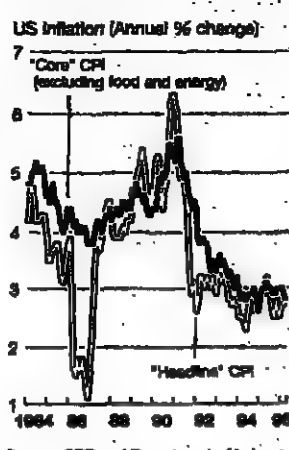
There are far wider implications, though, of the cheaper breakfast. In recent weeks, the US markets have once again started to worry about inflation.

Markets hate inflation. It pushes interest rates up, drags down bond prices and has a knock-on effect on equities. Higher inflation is generally accompanied by lower p/e ratios.

The fear of reviving inflation caused the Federal Reserve to lift interest rates in early 1994, precipitating a crash in bond prices, and a miserable year for the equity market too.

One reason people were worried about inflation in 1994 was the rise in commodity prices. Once again commodity prices are causing an inflation scare. Surging oil and grain prices

Is inflation in the pipeline?



have pushed the CRB futures index to an eight year high, as the chart shows.

Yet so far inflation has not responded. Both the core rate, excluding those volatile energy and food prices, and the headline rate are under 3 per cent.

Optimists can point out that in 1994, the rise in commodity prices did not follow through to higher inflation. Maybe they will not again. And, they could add, Philip Morris is cutting cereal prices even though grain prices are rising.

The problem with that argument, however, is that the price of grain has little to do with the price of a box of bran flakes. Or, more broadly, as Stephen Roach, chief economist at Morgan Stanley, says, commodity prices represent only 12 per cent of corporate costs.

Much more important to companies is the cost of labour - which Roach says makes up 70 per cent of costs. Wages are beginning to rise again, and an increase in minimum wage rates is being discussed in Washington.

Jane Lucas, equities strategist at Schroder Wertheim, says: "Summer wage negotiations are coming up. It's a subject that will not go away." She expects inflation to edge up through the year, reaching 3.2 per cent by the fourth quarter.

As a result, the stock market is getting jittery about inflation, over-reacting to good and bad news. On Thursday, for instance, the oil price fell and the market shot up. But Lucas

thinks the markets should not panic about inflation. It may be rising, but not dramatically so.

One factor that restrains consumer price inflation - again demonstrated by grape nut Monday - is that companies such as Philip Morris are reacting to a rebellion by consumers on high prices. It is getting harder to pass on their higher costs to customers, while any reduction in manufacturing costs are being demanded by end-users.

Kimberly-Clark, the tissue and nappy group, this week said it had cut the price of tissues, following a similar reduction by its main competitor Procter & Gamble last month. After sharp rises in pulp costs last year, falling pulp prices now mean consumers expect lower paper prices.

In Kimberly-Clark's case, the price cuts will reduce this year's revenues by \$120m. And Kimberly-Clark's chairman said the uncertainty about the tissue market meant that the group would not now achieve expected earnings.

One way or another, then, the markets have more to chew on than a mouthful of raisin bran.

Inflation could be rising, pushed by higher costs. At the same time, companies are under pressure to take those increased costs out of their margins. That might put a lid on inflation but the pain would be felt in corporate earnings instead.

Better enjoy that bowl of bran flakes while you can.

Dow Jones Ind Average
Monday: 5,692.92 + 80.33
Tuesday: 5,620.02 + 27.10
Wednesday: 5,548.93 - 70.09
Thursday: 5,551.74 + 1.81
Friday:

London

Takeovers go epidemic

Patrick Haverson is in a fever over speculation

Good morning sir, welcome to the London stock market. Your choices of takeover stories today are: Ladbroke, where there is talk of Scottish & Newcastle launching a bid; British Gas, where our chaps in the options market recommend you look close at what BP or Shell might be planning; and Lucas, which may soon be subject to an offer from one of a number of possible bidders, including GKN, TI and BTR.

If none of those take your fancy, how about the utilities, where National Power went down a treat with our more experienced customers last week, or telecoms, where Cable & Wireless and British Telecom may be cooking up something particularly appetising?

To say that the stock market is in the grip of takeover fever is an understatement. Speculation, which helped carry the FT-SE 100 index through 3,800 and to record highs this week,

has become so intense that dealers now talk each morning of the "bid story of the day".

The last few days have been typical of recent months. On Monday KRF, the commercial vehicle maker, was a possible target, on Tuesday it was National Power. Wednesday saw other electricity generators share the limelight, while on Thursday London Electricity was the name on every dealer's lips. Yesterday, British Gas was candidate *du jour*.

The stoutness of the foundations upon which these stories were built varied greatly. Everyone knows C&W and BT have been talking about a deal for some time. National Power seemed unlikely but subsequently became the subject of a possible merger offer, while London Electricity and other suppliers were always high up on a list of takeover targets by virtue of their (increasingly) solitary independent status.

As for ERF, Lucas and British Gas, they may have simply strayed into the stock market's

headlights for a brief moment. They may just as quickly slip back into the shadows.

Whether there is any pattern or meaning to the speculation is difficult to answer. Share prices are hardly cheap, so it cannot be a question of value. Restructuring and rationalising of the corporate world which might provide the climate within which merger mania thrives is, arguably, behind us. UK companies have rarely been leaner or fitter.

The easy availability of capital could be a clue. Banks, eager to expand their loan books, seem quite willing to hand over large sums to acquirers, low interest rates mean raising funds on the capital markets is affordable, and the strength of the stock market makes equity-financed deals popular.

Individual sectors can be vulnerable to takeover speculation for individual reasons. Electricity is the perfect example, although the one subsector where the rumours proved true

Electricity sector: The perfect subject for takeover speculation

FT-SE-A Electricity sector relative to the FT-SE-A All-Share Index



Highlights of the week

	Price	Change	52 week	52 week
	5/4/96	on week	High	Low
FT-SE 100 Index	3857.1	+80.3	3857.1	3209.3
FT-SE Mid 250 Index	4534.5	+125.5	4534.5	3497.8
Ambud	185	+21%	239%	169%
Ashley (Lauris)	195	+30	195	95
Bess	794	+34	797%	542
British Biotech	2805	+440	2825	481
British Land	425	+32	435	355
Carab Pharm	525	+111	570	103
Carpath	575%	+55%	583	255
EPF	239	+54	260	175
Land Securities	582	+29	579	551
Miro Focus	1335	+437	1340	559
Moss Bros	910	+92	920	410
National Power	582	+100	605	482
Reiters	794	+35	814	485

Utilities bid talk
Puffed along by the leaders
Sector revival
Results better than expected
Increased consumer spending
Cancer treatment hopes
Merrill Lynch sector upgrade
Horse Govett recommends
Increased consumer spending
Takeover talk
Merrill Lynch sector upgrade
Speculative support
Increased consumer spending
Approach by Southern Co
Encouraging new product news



Is the government's vision for the power industry in ruins? Alan Harper

this week - the generators - was probably the area which had been most overlooked.

The first round of restructuring in the electricity industry was two years ago. Now it seems poised for a second, potentially final, round. Within the next fortnight Ian Lang, the trade and industry secretary, is expected to announce his judgment on the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's review of two takeover bids - National Power's for Southern Electric and PowerGen's for Midlands Electricity.

The MMC has given its approval to the bids, which allow vertical integration within the industry for the first time since privatisation. If, as expected, the government approves the MMC's findings, then it may be open season again, not just on the few remaining independent regional suppliers - Yorkshire, East Midlands and London - but on the generators as well.

It was against this background that Southern Company made its pre-emptive move on Wednesday, when it declared an interest in concluding a merger with Britain's largest generator, National Power. Although market speculation on Tuesday had smothered out Southern earlier than it had anticipated, the announcement - and National Power's subsequent rejection of merger talks - put the generators, including the smaller PowerGen, firmly in play.

Although activity in the sector may quieten for a few days while the market awaits Lang's ruling, the sector appears set for a prolonged period of unsettling bid speculation. And when the latest consolidation

is complete, the government's original plans for the industry after privatisation - separate power generators competing to provide distributors with electricity to sell to customers in an open and competitive market - may end in ruins.

Yet takeover fever was not the only factor driving share prices higher this week. A raft of economic data was broadly encouraging for stocks. Growth in producer input and output prices remained weak in March, recent housing activity was reported to be picking up, and the unemployment rate fell to a five-year low.

Although the evidence of a strengthening economy in the data might normally have worried the market, because it would have reduced the chances of a further easing of UK monetary policy, any negative thinking along these lines was quickly overtaken by the news on Thursday that the Bundesbank had cut interest rates in Germany.

While a German rate cut had been widely trailed, the move came earlier than expected and the scale of the reductions - both the discount and Lombard rates were cut by half a percentage point to 2.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively - was higher than anticipated.

City opinion was divided over whether this easing would leave the UK government with extra room to bring domestic interest rates down further. If it does cut rates, and if take-over fever continues, there may be nothing to stop Footsie from breaking through the 4,000 barrier before May is out.



Barry Riley

Chasing the reluctant revenues

Increasing taxes is one thing, collecting them another

Only one-armed economists successfully sell books, which must be free of "on the other hand" prevarication, so Roger Bootle has painfully had his other hand amputated before publishing *The Death of Inflation* this week. As Murphy's Law would have it, though, his obituary of the rising price phenomenon has coincided with a slight uptick in pay inflation in the UK as the pre-election boom begins to accelerate. And although retail price inflation may be down it is not, at 2.7 per cent by any means out.

Who wants low inflation, anyway? You and I do, but we may be in a minority. There always was a certain corrupting appeal in receiving double-digit pay increases every year, collecting (say) 12 per cent interest on savings deposits and scanning the bulging homes for sale ad sections to check on the prices asked for houses up the road.

Rising inflation was also a pleasurable experience for the government in the 1950s and the 1960s. Although the National Debt was very high in relation to the size of the economy - well over 100 per cent of GDP in the 1950s, against 50 per cent now - financing it at low interest rates never seemed to be much of a problem.

Repaying it was unnecessary, because inflation

shrank it away, but investors took a long time to realise that they were getting a correspondingly dreadful deal. Meanwhile serious budget deficits were rare, because the inflation regularly encouraged tax revenues to be "buoyant".

Now the British government, like most others in developed economies, has dug itself into a hole. The public sector borrowing requirement for the fiscal year 1995-96 was published this week, and at £23bn it turned out to be some £9bn higher than forecast last summer, and little improved on the £26bn for 1994-95. The £3bn slippage since last November's intermediate estimate turns out to be as large as the much-vaunted income tax cuts in the Budget.

One way or another we can pin a lot of the blame on to that drop in inflation. This time, for instance, investors in government bonds are not taking anything for granted, and they were upset once again by the economic buoyancy indicated by the labour market statistics released this week. When the government issues £3bn of ten-year gilts next Wednesday it will have to pay interest of about 8.1 per cent - say 5.6 per cent in real terms, if you believe in the official target of 2.5 per cent for inflation.

Meanwhile tax revenues are the reverse of buoyant; we could call them reluctant.

Treasury officials are scratching their heads as projected receipts disappear into a maze of black economy dodges and into VAT avoidance schemes hawked around by accountants.

You can argue that the country is simply approaching its taxable limit. Citizens are resisting the steep increases in

Inflation was a pleasurable experience for the government in the 1950s and 1960s

taxes imposed since 1993. But as a result, fiscal policy has become even looser than it was supposed to be, and the government is plainly not going to take corrective action ahead of the next election.

This British revenue crisis is only a small part of a general fiscal problem affecting most of Europe, and also Japan. The economists at the International Monetary Fund have been not so much scratching their heads as tearing their hair out as they see public sector indebtedness exploding all around. Social security benefits must be cut and retirement ages raised to 67, they said this week, although it is unlikely that

Italian politicians, for instance, will be listening ahead of tomorrow's elections.

The drop in inflation throughout the developed world reflects a breakdown in the old corporatist consensus through which employers and trade unions agreed on inflationary wage and price rises and governments (except, perhaps, in Germany) were willing to print the money to finance the spiral.

In the 1990s companies are aggressively shrinking the more expensive sections of their payrolls and are unleashing increasing numbers of workers - especially males - on to European social security systems. Even the comfortable burghers of Basel in Switzerland face the serious employment consequences of the proposed merger of two local pharmaceuticals giants, Sandoz and Ciba. Corporate prosperity is therefore the counterpart of employee discontent and of threatened financial distress in the public sector.

It would be ironic if this low inflation squeeze on public finances were to force the monetisation of debt and, in a sudden Mexican-style collapse of currencies, the return of high inflation in the most vulnerable countries. Certainly it would not be a case of sleepy bondholders being undermined by unanticipated creeping inflation over a period of

Offshore managed funds and UK managed funds are listed in Section One

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OFFSHORE AND OVERSEAS

BERMUDA (SIB RECOGNISED)

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

GUERNSEY (REGULATED)**

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

BERMUDA (REGULATED)**

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
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Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

IRELAND (SIB RECOGNISED)

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

IRELAND (REGULATED)**

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

ISLE OF MAN (SIB RECOGNISED)

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

ISLE OF MAN (REGULATED)**

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

JERSEY (SIB RECOGNISED)

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

JERSEY (REGULATED)**

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

LUXEMBOURG (SIB RECOGNISED)

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

LUXEMBOURG (REGULATED)**

Fund Name	Unit Price	Change
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00
First City Fund Ltd	1.00	0.00

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WORLD STOCK MARKETS

AMERICA

Technology shares send Nasdaq ahead

Wall Street

Rising technology shares sent the Nasdaq composite further into record territory at mid-session, while broader indices were flat in active trading that was driven by the expiry of equity options and futures, writes Lisa Branstetter in New York.

By early afternoon, the Nasdaq had added 4.40 to the 15.43 it rose on Thursday, bringing the index to 1,440.70 and bettering Thursday's record close. The Pacific Stock Exchange technology index added 0.5 per cent.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average swung between positive and negative territory before settling with a loss of 10.84 at 5,540.50 by 1 pm. The Standard & Poor's 500 rose 2.36 at 645.87, while the American Stock Exchange composite added 2.79 at 565.87. NYSE volume was 243m shares.

Much attention was focused yesterday on two popular initial public offerings. Shares in theme restaurants, the chain of theme restaurants that includes film and television stars among its investors, was priced late on Thursday at \$15 a share and jumped to \$24 before settling back at \$23.

CompuServe, an online service provider being spun off by E & R Block, was priced late on Thursday at \$30 a share and started trading yesterday near \$35 before settling back to \$34.

Earnings reports continued to influence activity. Kellogg, the US cereal maker, added \$1 at \$7.14 after posting first quarter operating profits of 99 cents a share, 1 cent ahead of analyst estimates.

General Motors lost 3/4 at \$66.40 after presenting first quarter earnings of 80 cents a share, 9 cents lower than the mean estimate from analysts.

Technology shares were cheered by a healthy earnings report from Microsoft that was released on Thursday after the market closed. Microsoft's shares added \$1.10 to the more than \$3 they gained on Thursday as investors bet on a strong profits report, bringing the share price to \$110.74.

Internet-related shares were also stronger yesterday with the American Stock Exchange/Interactive Week Index up 1.3 per cent stronger. UUNET added 3/4 at \$42.24, Netcom Online Communications Services rose 1/4 at \$31.14 and America Online was 1/4 stronger at \$60.74.

Broader indices were espe-

cially volatile due to the expiry of equity options and futures known as "double witching".

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The Dow Jones Industrial Average swung between positive and negative territory before settling with a loss of 10.84 at 5,540.50 by 1 pm. The Standard & Poor's 500 rose 2.36 at 645.87, while the American Stock Exchange composite added 2.79 at 565.87. NYSE volume was 243m shares.

Much attention was focused yesterday on two popular initial public offerings. Shares in theme restaurants, the chain of theme restaurants that includes film and television stars among its investors, was priced late on Thursday at \$15 a share and jumped to \$24 before settling back at \$23.

CompuServe, an online service provider being spun off by E & R Block, was priced late on Thursday at \$30 a share and started trading yesterday near \$35 before settling back to \$34.

Earnings reports continued to influence activity. Kellogg, the US cereal maker, added \$1 at \$7.14 after posting first quarter operating profits of 99 cents a share, 1 cent ahead of analyst estimates.

General Motors lost 3/4 at \$66.40 after presenting first quarter earnings of 80 cents a share, 9 cents lower than the mean estimate from analysts.

Technology shares were cheered by a healthy earnings report from Microsoft that was released on Thursday after the market closed. Microsoft's shares added \$1.10 to the more than \$3 they gained on Thursday as investors bet on a strong profits report, bringing the share price to \$110.74.

Internet-related shares were also stronger yesterday with the American Stock Exchange/Interactive Week Index up 1.3 per cent stronger. UUNET added 3/4 at \$42.24, Netcom Online Communications Services rose 1/4 at \$31.14 and America Online was 1/4 stronger at \$60.74.

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EUROPE

Madrid closes at year high on rate cut hopes

There was interest in MADRID which closed at its high for the year as expectations grew for a cut in key money rates. The general index rose 4.16 to 355.78.

Electric utilities rose strongly. Endesa climbed Pt220 to Pt470, Iberdrola jumped Pt235 to Pt412 and Union Fenosa rose Pt12 to Pt173.

Analysts cautioned, however, that the late surge in prices seemed exaggerated and they warned that the market could see profit-taking on Monday.

FRANKFURT settled higher in the Dax on a rise in the dollar, after a disappointing official session.

The Dax index made 11.68 to 2,556.82 after the Dax rose 1.00 to 2,536.52.

During the session investors were nervous ahead of the expiry of futures, but trading picked up once that had been completed.

Mannesmann was among the strongest gainers in late trading, ending the Dax at Dm56.30 or 1.1 per cent at Dm567.00 ahead of the group's annual press conference next Wednesday.

Continental was up 76bps or 3 per cent at Dm26.50 after it said that it saw no need to keep the restrictions on shareholder voting rights. The current policy limits voting rights to a maximum of 5 per cent of

ASIA PACIFIC

Nikkei ahead as Seoul remains at peak for year

Tokyo

Shares turned higher on afternoon buying by domestic institutions and the Nikkei index closed higher for the first time in four trading days in spite of the year's appreciation, writes Anna Kato in Tokyo.

The Nikkei 225 index rose 71.84 to 21,888.84, after moving between 21,879.88 and 21,931.37. The yen's rise against the dollar prompted profit-taking and technical selling, and the Nikkei index fell to the day's low in the morning.

However, it recovered losses on bargain hunting and index-linked buying by foreigners in the afternoon.

Volume was 800m shares against 528.4m. Buying by domestic institutions followed the morning decline came to some 300m shares.

The Toxip index of all first section stocks gained 6.08 to 1,679.40, and the Nikkei 300 gained 1.57 to 310.98. Advances fell from 587 to 508 with 161 issues unchanged.

In London, the ISE/Nikkei 50 index rose 0.14 to 1,456.18.

Steel manufacturers were mixed. Nippon Steel, the day's most active issue, rose Y1 to Y373, NKK closed unchanged being handed dealers' orders.

In Buenos Aires, the Merval index had put on 13.73 or 2.6 per cent to 561.77 by mid-session.

The overall index lifted 77.1 to 10,574.8, and gold eased 4.3 to 1,857.3.

Industrial gains were widespread with cyclical and blue chip stocks featuring. Iscor, the steelmaker picked up 8 cents to close at \$3.98.

Sasol, the petrochemical group, was up R2 at R44.50.

FT/SE ACTUARIES WORLD INDICES

The FT/SE Actuaries World Indices are owned by FT-SE International Limited, Goldman, Sachs & Co. and Standard & Poor's. The indices are compiled by FT-SE International and Goldman Sachs in conjunction with the Faculty of Actuaries and the Institute of Actuaries. NetWatt Securities Ltd is a co-ordinator of the indices.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MARKETS

Figures in parentheses show number of issues of stock

US Dollar Index

Day's Change %

Point

YTD

Local

DM

YTD

Local

DM

YTD

Local

DM

YTD

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YTD

Local

DM

FT-SE ACTUARIES SHARE INDICES

Apr 19

Hourly changes

Open

10.30

11.00

12.00

13.00

14.00

15.00

Close

FT-SE 100

1714.18

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LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE: Dealings

Details of business done shown below have been taken with consent from the London Stock Exchange Official List and should not be reproduced without permission.
Details relate to those securities not included in the FT Share Information Service.
Unless otherwise indicated prices are in pence. The prices are those at which the business was done in the 24 hours up to 5 pm on Thursday and settled through the Stock Exchange Settlement system. They are not in order of execution but in ascending order of which denotes the day's highest and lowest dealings.
For those securities in which no business was recorded in Thursday's Official List the latest recorded business in the four previous days is given with the relevant date.
* Bargains at special prices. * Bargains done the previous day.

British Funds, etc

Treasury 100% 2000000 - £122.22

Corporation and County Stocks

Birmingham Corp 2 1/2% 1997 after - £121.75
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Leeds City of 10 1/4% 2000 - £130.14
Manchester Corp 1991 3% 2000 - £130.14
Mersey-Tyne Borough of 11 1/4% 2000 - £130.14

UK Public Bonds

North Province 3 1/4% Funded Debt - £126.00
Port of London Authority 2 1/2% Funded Debt - £126.00

Foreign Stocks, Bonds, etc (coupons payable in London)

Geac (Ireland) plc 1000000 - £187.50
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Starting Issues by Overseas Borrowers

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It's also the ideal opportunity to attend a series of business seminars. This year's event has a major new initiative.
"The World of Light Commercial Vehicles", a new hall, featuring every aspect of light commercials for the fleet industry.
It all adds up to a Show that has something of value for everyone.
As last year, no entry unless you register in advance. Phone now for your ticket application.
IF YOU NEED TO KNOW, YOU NEED TO GO.

LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE

MARKET REPORT

FT-SE indices soar to new records on bid hopes

By Steve Thompson, UK Stock Market Editor

UK shares continued their upward spiral yesterday with all the main indices racing ahead to new records.

The latest broad advance was fuelled by over-present takeover speculation, a good showing by international bond markets, which prompted a rise in gilts, and another strong rise on Wall Street.

Earlier in the day the stockmarket had reached higher as the City's big securities houses became embroiled in the expiry of the FT-SE 100 April index option which produced a flurry of exceptionally

heavy trading in the option. It became clear yesterday that the recent upsurge in the FT-SE 100 had caught many of the big institutions on the wrong foot.

"There is a feeling in the market that a lot of the big funds have been reluctant to chase London stocks during their strong run and they are now having to pay up to get their weightings right. They expected the market to correct sharply and are now 150 points wrong. It is a very painful exercise for them."

There was further evidence yesterday of more substantial programme trading activity. Goldman Sachs was said to have again been

one of the biggest traders in the marketplace. The US investment bank said to have been heavily involved in programme trade business, a buy programme, whose value has been estimated at anything up to \$1bn and said to have been started at the end of last week, was still being worked yesterday.

Another big programme, concentrated on the FT-SE 100 and this time weighted on the sell side and estimated at around \$100m, printed out on the close of trading.

Such was the pent-up demand in the market that the selling failed to produce much of a dent in the FT-SE 100.

One of the features of the day's

trading was the expiry of the FT-SE 100 April index options in mid-morning. Opening at around 5 points higher, the FT-SE 100 began to accelerate and as the expiry took place, before easing off in the afternoon, a bout of intense activity in options, the cash market and the future.

Dealers said one of the big European securities houses was pushing the market aggressively at the expiry and one of the US-owned houses trying to drive the market in the other direction.

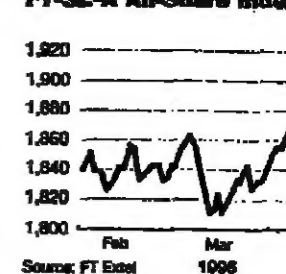
At the close the FT-SE 100 was 36.4 higher at an all-time record of 3,857.1, extending the rise on the week to 90.3, or 2.4 per cent. The

FT-SE Mid 250 gave an even more impressive performance, surging a further 40.9 to 4,534.5, up 126.5, or 2.8 per cent on the week, while the FT-SE Small Cap index jumped 18.2 to a record 2,188.0.

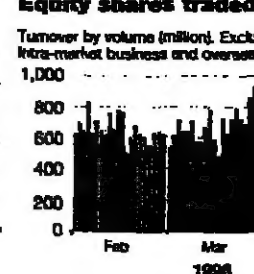
Turnover in equities reached 909.3m shares at the 8pm count. The value of customer business on Thursday was £2.5bn.

The takeover speculation that has been such a feature of the market this week alighted yesterday on British Gas where there was massive trading in the stock and the traded options. Oil shares were troubled by rumours that Iraq would soon be able to resume some oil sales.

FT-SE-A All-Share Index



Equity shares traded



Indices and ratios

FT-SE Mid 250	4534.5	+40.9
FT-SE-A 350	1945.4	+18.2
FT-SE-A All-Share	3857.1	+17.8
FT-SE-A All-Share yield	3.87	3.70
FT Ordinary index	2885.2	+38.1
FT-SE-A Non-Fin p/e	17.64	17.46
FT-SE 100 Fin p/e	3862.50	+36.50
10 yr gilt yield	8.01	8.06
Long gilt/short gilt ratio	2.26	2.26

FT-SE 100 Index

Closing index for Apr 19	3857.1
Change over week	+90.3
Apr 18	3820.7
Apr 17	3805.6
Apr 16	3825.3
Apr 15	3790.5
High	3857.1
Low	3774.9
Ultra-day high and low for week	

TRADING VOLUME IN MAJOR STOCKS

Stock	Vol.	Change	Day's %	Vol.	Change	Day's %
Admiral	501	44.4	+9.9	14,000	271	+2.0
Admiral Group	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral National	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1

EQUITY FUTURES AND OPTIONS TRADING

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Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	+11.1	1,100	112	+11.1

Options boost for Gas

British Gas bounded ahead as takeover speculation mingled with a number of technical stories to fuel up sentiment and help turnover to 21m.

This was the second best activity in the Footsie, and the shares closed 10 higher at 250.4p.

The bid rumours were given a helping hand from disparate share price movements for the two oil giants. Shell, seen by City goons as the most likely Gas predator, came off 4 to 369p while BP moved noticeably higher, adding 5 to 388.5p.

Options activity added to the excitement. The equivalent of almost 12m shares was traded in the stock options pits with the heaviest punters going for the September 360 calls.

The more pragmatic analysts took the Gas bid talk with a pinch of salt. "A bid at this delicate stage ahead of the Ofgas report early next month does not look plausible," said one sector watcher.

A hold note yesterday from NatWest Securities drew attention to the competition and cash-flow problems facing Gas.

"If Ofgas gets its way - although this is not a foregone conclusion - we believe Gas will be forced to cut its dividend", the broker declares.

SKline active

Pharmaceuticals and consumer products group SmithKline Beecham sparked in heavy trading following recommendations from two leading brokers. The shares jumped 37 to 709.5p, making it one of the day's best performing stocks in the Footsie.

SmithKline announced first quarter figures in line with market expectations on Thursday, and it indicated improvement will continue for the year.

SmithKline's positive outlook was reinforced by a report from the stock analyst. "The figures were as weak as expected but we see strong underlying growth".

Sentiment in London was

NEW 52 WEEK HIGHS AND LOWS

Stock	High	Low	High	Low
Admiral	14,000	271	14,000	271
Admiral Group	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral National	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	1,100	112
Admiral PLC	1,100	112	1,100	112

CHIEF PRICE CHANGES

Stock	Change	Day's %
Admiral	233	+17
Admiral Group	198	+16
Admiral National	105	+10
Admiral PLC	153	+16
Admiral PLC	153	+16
Admiral PLC	153	+16
Admiral PLC	153	+16
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FT-SE Actuarial Share Indices

Index	Value	Change	Day's %
FT-SE 100	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE Mid 250	4534.5	+40.9	+0.90
FT-SE Small Cap	2188.0	+18.2	+0.83
FT-SE 350	1945.4	+18.2	+0.93
FT-SE 1000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 10000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 100000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 1000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 10000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 100000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46

The UK Series

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FT-SE 100000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 1000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 10000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 100000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46

Hourly movements

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FT-SE 1000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
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FT-SE 100000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46

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FT-SE 10000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 100000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 1000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 10000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46
FT-SE 100000000	3857.1	+17.8	+0.46

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B DISTRIBUTION		1986		1984		1983		1982	
State	Price	1986	1984	1986	1984	1986	1984	1986	1984
Alabama	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Alaska	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Arizona	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Arkansas	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
California	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Colorado	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Connecticut	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Delaware	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
District of Columbia	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Florida	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Georgia	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
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Louisiana	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Maine	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
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North Dakota	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Ohio	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Oklahoma	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
Oregon	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
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Rhode Island	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229
South Carolina	2.10	277	229	277	229	277	229	277	229

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FINANCIAL TIMES

Weekend April 20/April 21 1996

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CDU to bring forward plans for cutting tax burden on Germans

By Peter Norman in Bonn

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union will accelerate plans for a fundamental reform of Germany's complex and inequitable income tax system, the party said yesterday. The aim is to complete legislation before the general election in late 1998 so that new rules can take effect in 1999.

Mr Peter Hintze, CDU secretary-general, said after a meeting of the presidium, the party's highest decision-making body, that reform would reduce the tax burden and simplify the law.

The party was also determined to press ahead with corporate tax reform and fiscal measures to encourage company start-ups as part of the package of spending

cuts, welfare restructuring and supply side reforms being negotiated by senior policymakers in the Bonn coalition.

Mr Hintze said the measures, which are due to be agreed by the CDU, its Bavarian Christian Social Union sister party and the liberal Free Democrat party next Thursday, are intended to ensure Germany's long-term competitiveness in a globalised world economy and take account of changes in the world of work.

The presidium - which consists of Mr Kohl as party chairman, his deputies, senior ministers and the prime ministers of CDU-run Länder (states) - backed the chancellor's vision of budget cuts and limited cuts in the social welfare sector, he said.

While declaring that the government was serious in wanting

to restructure Germany's welfare state, Mr Hintze said it would not abandon services it considered essential.

It would press ahead with the controversial establishment of a state insurance scheme for residential care for the elderly from July, which has been widely condemned as costly by business leaders.

Mr Hintze also said the government stood by Germany's system of raising pensions each year in line with net incomes.

Yesterday's CDU announcement was a sign that income tax reform is climbing rapidly up the political agenda in spite of resistance from the finance ministry, which fears some of the ideas under consideration would add significantly to existing shortfalls in tax revenue.

Two proposals for a simpler and fairer income tax system have emerged over the past week.

On Thursday, Mr Hermann Otto Solms, the FDP leader in the Bundestag, proposed a system based on tax rates of 15 per cent, 25 per cent and 35 per cent instead of the present regime with a top rate of 53 per cent.

Mr Gunmar Uldall, the economic policy spokesman of the CDU/CSU in the Bundestag, has proposed a system with tax rates between 8 and 28 per cent. His model was adopted last Monday, with the addition of a top tax rate of 35 per cent, as a joint policy proposal for the German tax officers' trade union, the civil service federation and the blue-collar wing of the CDU.

Beef ban

Continued from Page 1

low incidence of BSE could be explained by the fact that there was much more grass-based, as against intensive, farming in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK.

The province also has a comprehensive "tracing" regime under which the history of every animal is kept on a computer database - making it easy to identify the source of any infected cattle.

A Commission official said requests to have the ban lifted in regions other than Northern Ireland were unlikely to succeed. "The first question asked would be, where do you draw the line? Other member states are likely to be cautious about any such requests," he said.

Mr Andrew Welsh, the Scottish National party MP for the beef-farming constituency of Angus East, said Britain should grab the opportunity for a lifting of the ban on a regional basis.

"If the European Union allows regional exemptions, we should be prepared to use them," Mr Welsh said. "It is quite unacceptable the government is acting in this way."

Italian rightwing sees split as election campaign closes

By Robert Graham in Rome

Major differences emerged in the leadership of the rightwing Freedom Alliance headed by Italy's former prime minister Mr Silvio Berlusconi as the campaign for tomorrow's general election closed yesterday.

Supporters of Mr Berlusconi attacked Mr Gianfranco Fini, the head of the rightist National Alliance, for preparing to take over the leadership.

The attack came in Il Foglio, a new daily edited by Mr Giuliano Ferrara, a close adviser of Mr Berlusconi and a former minister in his government. An editorial warned that Mr Fini had changed his tactics inside the Freedom Alliance.

"He is no longer the silent

Although the two allies have had a strained relationship for several months, this is the first time it has surfaced so publicly.

Some commentators saw the last-minute attacks on Mr Fini as an attempt to prepare the ground for blaming an eventual defeat of the Freedom Alliance on the leader of the National Alliance.

Mr Berlusconi's own Forza Italia party has begun to realise that Mr Fini has set too much of the electoral agenda and pulled their alliance too far to the right.

Publication of opinion polls is banned during the month-long election campaign, but the centre-left and several business organisations have allowed some poll data to leak out.

These show the centre-left

tem and the distribution of party support. Olive Tree will still have to gain a bigger swing to prevent the right holding a slight edge in the chamber of deputies. In a close-run contest, with between 40 and 60 of the seats highly marginal, the outcome could be unclear until the last votes are counted next Tuesday.

Despite the uncertainties, the financial markets have remained calm. By yesterday the lira had strengthened almost 2 per cent against the D-mark since the campaign began.

Campaigning ended last night with a television debate between Mr Berlusconi and Mr Romano Prodi, the Bologna economics professor who heads Olive Tree.

The manner in which the two leaders arrived to record the "head to head" programme yesterday afternoon underlined the huge gulf in their styles. Mr Berlusconi turned up in an eight-car motorcade, while Mr Prodi arrived in a taxi.

Olive branch to the right, Page 8

\$600m offer to haemophiliacs with HIV

By Richard Waters in New York

Companies which make blood clotting agents for haemophiliacs have offered \$600m in compensation to Americans who contracted the HIV virus from their products in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The four groups involved estimate their offer is worth \$100,000 for each American infected by the virus in this way.

The sum per head is far less than the \$450,000 under a recent settlement in Japan, but in line with the \$35,000 a head under a German compensation fund.

The Centre for Disease Control, based in Atlanta, Georgia, said 6,000 haemophiliacs in the US

Drugs groups set to compensate US patients given infected blood

contracted the virus, although some put the figure higher. The offer, which also includes \$40m to cover administration and legal costs, will be abandoned if more than 100 people reject it to pursue their cases through the courts, the four groups said.

Heat treating of blood began in 1984, and an effective test for HIV came into use in 1985. Before this, plaintiffs claim, the manufacturers failed to issue sufficient warnings about the risks of viruses in blood clotting agents, and did not act quickly enough

to curtail the spread of HIV.

The bulk of the settlement would be borne by Bayer, the German pharmaceuticals giant which controlled 45 per cent of the US blood clotting market. It would pay \$388m, with Rhône-Poulenc Rorer, a French-owned company, and Baxter International, a US group, contributing \$128m each. The rest would come from a division of Green Cross, a Japanese company.

Bayer said the size of the offer in part reflected the fact that HIV sufferers had had little success in

the cases which have come to court in the US.

Bayer has successfully defended 12 cases, while only one - against Rhône-Poulenc Rorer - has resulted in a victory for the plaintiff. That decision was overturned on appeal.

The higher compensation paid to the 400 haemophiliacs in Japan was ordered by courts in Tokyo and Osaka, leaving the manufacturers little say.

As in Germany, half the compensation was provided by taxpayers, with the manufacturers paying the other half.

An earlier offer in the US made by Baxter and Rhône-Poulenc, worth around \$30,000 a person, was turned down two years ago.

THE LEX COLUMN

Another planet

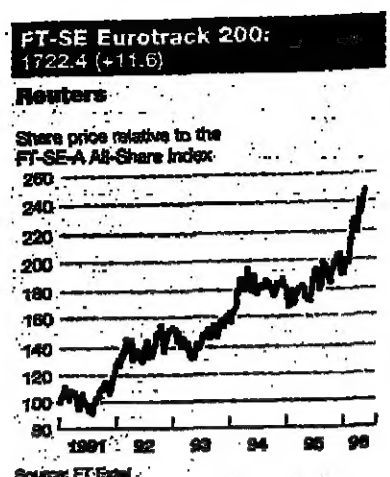
It is the stuff that Hollywood dreams are made of. Only five years after it opened with a massive fanfare, the Planet Hollywood restaurant group started trading on the stock market yesterday with a capitalisation of over \$2.5bn, representing a 1995 price-earnings ratio of more than 100 times. Of course, it has an enormously strong brand, an aggressive programme for new openings, and a conservative depreciation policy, which make it far more attractive than the pie suggests. But not that attractive.

The Planet Hollywood show must be selling for directors of the UK's Bank of England. Not only did the bulk of Planet's directors come from Bank's wholly-owned Hard Rock Cafe chain. But the success of the flotation raises an awkward strategic issue for Bank. If investors are prepared to pay big numbers for successful branded restaurant businesses, why is Bank not following suit with Hard Rock?

Rank suggests it has no intention of demerging Hard Rock, and it would struggle to know what to do with any proceeds from a flotation - it is already awash with cash after selling down its Bank Xerox stake. Nonetheless, Planet Hollywood does seem to provide a compelling argument for a demerger. Hard Rock would have found it easier to retain management as a separately listed company. And Bank has clearly missed out on a phenomenal market opportunity by failing to build up its network of owned restaurants before a recent spurt. Given a lack of obvious synergies, other than a little joint buying, there does not seem much for the value of being part of a conglomerate.

Reuters

Reuters' share price performance threatens to melt one of its own dealing screens. The shares have gained 35 per cent so far this year, placing them top of the FT-SE 100 rankings. Investors' enthusiasm has been fuelled by hopes of a share buy-back as the information group prepares to return some of its \$500m cash pile to shareholders. And this week Reuters unveiled its new 3000 range of data products, which cost more than \$100m to develop. As a more user-friendly version of the existing 2000 series, analysts expect its launch to galvanise sales. In particular, Treasury 3000, the group's new system for bond dealers, is a direct attack on the stronghold of rival Bloomberg. Finally, Reuters seems to have survived the wave of mergers and takeovers among its banking customers relatively unscathed.



At the current price, however, even the group's admirers are starting to raise an eyebrow at the valuation. Reuters is trading on 27 times this year's earnings - an 85 per cent premium to the stock market average. But its earnings growth this year and next, estimated at 15 per cent per annum, is only in line with the market. First-quarter revenues grew by 9 per cent - well below levels of recent years - and the group will have difficulty ticking its 30 per cent margins much higher. Moreover, it has yet to get Inland Revenue clearance for a share repurchase. Even if it succeeds, at this price a buy-back will initially dilute earnings rather than enhancing them. Reuters is one of the UK's few high-quality growth stocks. But investors should click on hold for now.

UK stock market

The UK stock market's latest spurt - it hit new highs this week - makes analysts' conservative year-end targets for the FT-SE 100 index look pessimistic. The latest batch of company results has failed to deliver the nasty surprises many had feared, while the prospect of more bid activity and share buy-backs continues to bolster prices. Furthermore, similar conditions in the US have allowed the US stock market to get over a couple of mild attacks of the jitters.

The latest run-up may prove self-perpetuating, by bolstering investment flows. Re-investment of maturing T-bills - UK tax-exempt savings schemes - into unit trusts has increased the cash inflow from UK retail investors and there is anecdotal evidence of increasing investment by foreign funds.

UK companies have managed to sustain earnings during the recent eco-

nomie blip because cost-cutting has compensated for the lack of volume growth. There is every sign that profitability can be maintained even if economic growth remains slow. And since they are not re-investing all their extra cash in capital expenditure, there is still scope for share buy-backs. A rosier domestic economy this year is already priced in, but the latest German interest rate cut has fuelled hopes of an economic upturn in important European markets. The question of which sector to go for is more difficult: since growth stocks were "done" last year and the current cyclical play is nearly over, it is hard to see what comes next. Still, as long as bid and share buy-backs continue, and the US market remains upwardly mobile, this hardly seems to matter.

National Grid

The sparks may be flying elsewhere in the electricity sector, but National Grid is languishing: the shares have underperformed the market by 16 per cent since they were floated four months ago. There are plenty of reasons. The Grid is heading into a potentially tough regulatory review; the share price is still depressed by talk of Hanson selling its big stake; and the company has put out some depressing high cost and capital expenditure forecasts.

But investors should not panic. At the present price, the market is already taking a gloomy view of the outcome of the regulatory review. True, if the company's latest forecasts are to be believed, a grim review would leave it distinctly stretched. But they are not anything the Grid says now is part of the traditional poker game with its regulator.

Moreover the company could easily release some of the financial pressure by the simple expedient of selling Energis, its loss-making, capital-hungry fibre-optic telecoms business. Since the operation is almost certainly worth more to an established telecoms operator than to the Grid, selling it would make powerful sense and result in an immediate boost to cash-flow.

The Grid management's reluctance to take this step is risky: it could be a gift to a bidder willing to be bolder. So far, the electricity sector's rumour-mill has passed the Grid by. But unlike many of the ideas floating around, a bid for the Grid might actually add some value - by spinning off Energis, and taking a crack at shaking up the Grid's engineering-driven culture. Nobody should put money on it, but the logic is compelling.

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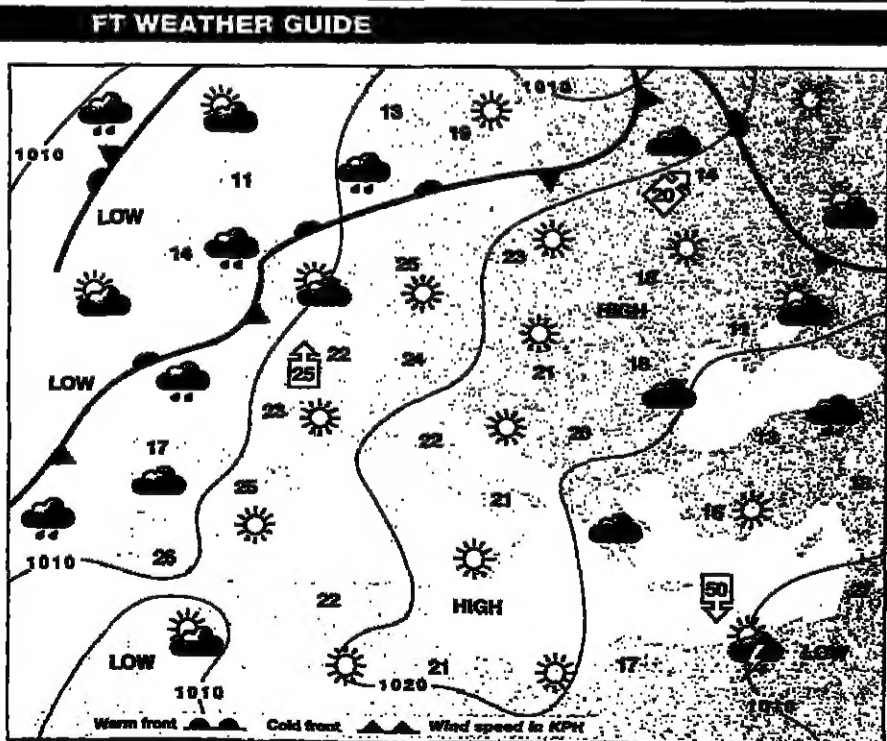
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Europe today

A high over central Europe will shift east, bringing calm conditions with ample sunshine to a large area, from Sicily and Sardinia, across the Alps and the Balkans to Poland and Belarus. Temperatures will reach 20C in most places. The Iberian peninsula, France, the Benelux and Germany will be cloudier but with warm southerly winds. Afternoon temperatures will reach 25C in Spain and Germany. North-west Spain, Brittany and the British Isles will have widespread cloud and rain. The south-eastern Mediterranean, especially Cyprus, will have thundery showers, while Greece and south-west Turkey will remain dry and sunny.

Five-day forecast

Northerly winds over the Black Sea will cause cold, wet conditions in northern Turkey. A large area from the Benelux across the Alps to Sicily, Belarus and Greece will be dry, sunny and warm. The Benelux, Germany and France will have temperatures well above the seasonal average, especially on Monday and Tuesday. However, later in the week cooler air from the west will move across the continent.



Station at 12 GMT. Temperatures maximum for day. Forecasts by Meteo Consult of the Netherlands

TODAY'S TEMPERATURES

Medan	sun	34	Beijing	sun	21	Cardiff	cloudy	18	Faro	sun	20	Madrid	sun	23	Rangoon	sun	36
Cebu	cloudy	33	Belfast	sun	12	Cardiff	cloudy	15	Frankfurt	sun	20	Manila	sun	23	Raykjavik	cloudy	4
Abu Dhabi	sun	34	Berlin	sun	24	Chicago	cloudy	18	Glasgow	sun	12	Moscow	cloudy	16	Rio	cloudy	24
Aden	sun	34	Bombay	sun	28	Cologne	sun	25	Hamburg	sun	26	Mumbai	sun	28	S. Francisco	sun	18
Algiers	sun	33	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dallas	sun	26	Helsinki	sun	24	Manila	sun	23	Seoul	sun	14
Amsterdam	sun	21	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dhaka	sun	30	Hong Kong	sun	26	Mexico City	sun	28	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Atlanta	sun	21	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
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Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	32
Buenos Aires	sun	28	Buenos Aires	sun	28	Dubai	sun	33	Hong Kong	sun	26	Moscow	cloudy	16	Shanghai	cloudy	